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The Ruins of Port-Royal

Les Ruines de Port-Royal des Champs en 1809

Nouvelle Edition

Augmented in a considerable way

LES RUINES
DE
PORT-ROYAL DES CHAMPS,
EN 1809,
ANNÉE SÉCULAIRE DE LA DESTRUCTION
DE CE MONASTÈRERE.

Translated from French by Claude AI Sonnet 4.6

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Chapter I The Two Port-Royals: Port-Royal des Champs and Port-Royal de Paris. Notes on These Two Monasteries

Although England has changed religion, she has carefully preserved the monuments of Catholicism; we know the interest she attaches to those fine collections published under the names *Monasticon Anglicanum*, *Hibernicum*, etc. Quite apart from the works we owe to the scholars Archdal, Dugdale, and Stevens, many abbeys, destroyed two centuries ago, have found in our own day historians devoted to them alone. Sweden, Norway, and Iceland have done much the same; I will mention in particular, for that last country, the ecclesiastical history published by Finnus Johannaeus, in four quarto volumes.

If ever the taste for scholarship is reborn among us, France—which has happily remained Catholic despite every effort of unbelief—France too will have her Monasticon; history will come to settle upon the ruins of those buildings, which for centuries were peopled by cenobites who cleared the wastelands surrounding them, brought agriculture to life and made it flourish, summoned industry and the arts, preserved the works of the genius of the ancients, and likewise cleared the field of literature. In its impartial balance, posterity—weighing the ravings of hatred against the accounts of truth—will find that many virtues were practiced there, and that much enlightenment had spread from there into society. Only then will these institutions be properly appreciated—institutions which, placing men between the world and eternity, divided their hours between contemplation and study.

Gatterer, Oberlin, and other Protestant writers fulfilled a duty and followed the impulse of their hearts in paying to these cenobites—and particularly to the Benedictines—a homage that so-called Catholics would wish to deny them. Who could recall without being moved by gratitude those monasteries (now suppressed) in Germany where piety and learning flourished? St. Emmeram, Polling, Banz, St. Blaise in the Black Forest; among us, the Blancs-Manteaux, St-Germain-des-Prés, St-Denis. In the Vosges, Étival, Moyenmoutier, Senones. The first of these took pride in having had as abbot Dom Hugo, Bishop of Ptolemais, to whom we owe the *Sacrae Antiquitatis Monumenta*, the *Annales des Prémontrés*, and so many other works. There also lived Dom Lejeune, author of a fine history of the Templars that vindicated their memory. At Moyenmoutier, Dom Belhomme assembled a magnificent library and published the history of that region. At Senones, Dom Calmet, having gathered together

monuments of genius, established among the students of his order a kind of academy; those who would wish to disparage him cite only his *Dissertation on Vampires*, while scholars value in him the man who published excellent commentaries on Holy Scripture and a history of Lorraine—the man whose benefactions and virtues edified the inhabitants of that mountain range, where his memory is still held in reverence.

Recent events, it is said, belong to the domain of flattery or satire: could this saying be turned against me? The monastery of which I am about to give an account has long since been annihilated. A full century weighs upon its ruins. The Jesuits, like the Port-Royalists, now belong only to history. The only task left to history is to be just to all.

Many people, even in the capital, do not know that there were two Port-Royals: that of the Fields (des Champs) and that of Paris. Port-Royal des Champs, formerly a monastery of Bernardine nuns, situated three myriameters from the capital, one from Versailles, and half a one from Chevreuse, was once called Port-Roi, although kings never resided there. A bull of Pope Honorius III speaks of the abbess of *portus regis*, and from that time the name Port-Royal prevailed. Madame de Sévigné called it a "dreadful wilderness," well suited to inspire a taste for working out one's salvation. Thomas, of the French Academy, writing to Ducis to tell him that he had dined with friends amid the ruins of Port-Royal, calls it a "horrible solitude."[1] Remove the epithets "dreadful" and "horrible": this wilderness, pleasingly varied, inspires instead a gentle melancholy that turns a man inward upon his own heart. I would add that the luxuriance of its brilliant vegetation invites the attentions of the naturalist.

In this valley—no less picturesque than that of Ermenonville—an abbey was founded in 1204 which has deserved to have ten or twelve historians: Dufossé, Fontaine, Guilbert, Mademoiselle Poulain, Besogne, Clémencet, and others, and before them, Racine the tragedian.

It is known that in former times the custom was for men to receive the Holy Eucharist in their hands, and women on a cloth called a *dominical*. This practice had been preserved at Port-Royal in the earliest period of its existence. An old obituary or necrology, kept in this abbey and cited in the *Voyages Liturgiques* of Le Brun Desmarettes, records that the bishop celebrating Mass for the blessing of a nun would consecrate for her a large host, break it into

1 See his *Œuvres posthumes*, octavo, Paris, 1802, p. 274.

eight pieces, give her communion from one of them, and then place in her right hand—covered with a *dominical*, or small white cloth—the other seven, from which she was to communicate herself during the octave of her consecration.[2] We read in Baillet that St. Odile, too, in her final illness, gave herself communion in this manner.[3]

Port-Royal de Paris was founded in 1625, in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, on the Rue de la Bourbe, from which it sometimes took its name, since that street contained its main entrance. This convent was suppressed, like all the others, by the decrees of the Constituent Assembly. In 1792, a band of criminals shattered the monument that held the heart of Cardinal de Noailles, which had been deposited in this house. A decree of the Commune had ordered that the priests detained at the Carmes be transferred there; the transfer never took place, for on the 2nd of September they were the victims of an outrage which, in the words of Bishop Fauchet, "will be the horror of every age to come."

It will be recalled that, among the works of art exhibited at the Louvre toward the end of the last century, there was a statue of St. Vincent de Paul, which an inscription described as "the philosopher of the 17th century"—for at that time persecution had proscribed the very name of "saint." Today the title of "philosopher" is proscribed by people, several of whom were once numbered among our persecutors—vile Proteuses who, having only borrowed ideas and opinions suited to the occasion, who take as the sole rule of their conduct vanity, ambition, and self-interest, watch closely from which quarter the wind of favor blows, and adjust their language and their conduct to the opinions of the day. Among our living writers you know several such men; only their names are missing here. Once unbelievers, they used to rail against religion and torment Catholics; today, devout (I do not say pious), they would gladly torment unbelievers in turn. But let us return to St. Vincent de Paul, philosopher of the 17th century. Never did philosophy—separated from religion, her sister—cover France and other lands, as religion did, with institutions meant, some to gather in those unfortunate beings who are the fruit of incontinence, others to care for the sick, under the direction of virtuous women who, for this good work, sacrifice every hope this world offers. A multitude of other institutions, intended to relieve poverty and spread learning, had been created by religion; persecution has devoured them. Religion alone could impose upon worthy cenobites the duty of settling among the ice fields of the Saint-Gothard and the Great Saint-Bernard, where

2 See the *Histoire générale de Port-Royal des Champs*, by Dom Clémencet, vol. I, pp. 9–10.
3 See Baillet, *Vie de Sainte Odile*, 13 December.

saddened nature never smiles upon the traveler, but where Christian charity has prepared help for him. In that hospice of the Maternité are honored the names of St. Vincent de Paul and of his friend the Abbé de Saint-Cyran, to whose innocence he bore witness when, in 1638, the latter was imprisoned in the Bastille.[4] Why has this union not endured among their disciples? In the church stands the statue just mentioned, beneath those vaults raised by Mother Marie-Angélique Arnauld in 1645; she herself was buried there in 1661. Benedict XIV, in the record of the beatification of Madame de Chantal, condemns the reproaches made against her for having been close to Mother Angélique. On her epitaph could be read these words, which ought to be the motto of every man: *cui tantum vivere bene vivere esse credidit* —she believed that to live was only worth doing in order to live well.

4 See Clémencet, vol. II, p. 19.

Chapter II Difference in Rule and Contrast in Conduct Between the Two Monasteries of Port-Royal

The first fervor of Port-Royal des Champs had given way to a laxity that had reached its height when, in 1618, an abbess only seventeen years old—Angélique Arnauld—undertook to reform this monastery; her talents, her courage, and still more her example, triumphed over every obstacle. She obtained that her house be placed under the immediate jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop. This was a tribute paid to the original right of things. The dignity of abbess, with which she had been provided for life by the king, she had changed so that henceforth it would be elective and held for three years; accordingly, she resigned her own.

Later, not far from Port-Royal, one would see Madame de Maintenon, in founding Saint-Cyr, reserve it exclusively for girls of noble birth, and even exclude those with disabilities[5]—that is, precisely those who most needed consolation and an education that might compensate for the misfortunes they owed to accident or to nature. At Port-Royal no such preferences were ever known, and every distinction of birth was trampled underfoot there. "The constitutions of the abbey require that one be reluctant to admit girls of high standing, recalling that God did not choose the powerful and the noble to glorify Him, but often what is most abject in the eyes of the world."[6] Another article states that if queens or daughters of France wished to visit the convent, every effort should be made to dissuade them[7]—so determined were they to keep out all thoughts of pride and every occasion for distraction. The cloister was kept so strictly that Mother Angélique refused her own father entry to the convent; she saw him only in the parlor, on visiting days.[8]

Here a striking parallel might be drawn between this monastery—where labor, sanctified by piety, brought together every virtue, and exercised over its surroundings nothing but the rule of kindness—and those noble chapters of either sex which displayed so much arrogance and engaged in so many lawsuits over wretched questions of precedence. There, the most eminent merit, the most distinguished genius, the most profound learning were not grounds for exclusion, but were simply insufficient credentials for entry into corporations open to

5 See the *Règlement de Saint-Cyr*.
6 See the *Constitutions du monastère de Port-Royal du Saint-Sacrement*, 12mo, Paris, 1665, chap. X, p. 60.
7 Ibid., p. 142.
8 See Clémencet, vol. I, p. 40 and following.

mediocrity furnished with the right parchments. Happily abolished is that Order of Fontevraud, in which men were subordinate to an abbess who, exercising spiritual powers through a delegated vicar, granted approval to confessors—a system a certain Father de la Mainferme dared to defend. Abolished too is that chapter of Remiremont, to whose church came processions, from parishes far and wide owing it allegiance, chanting what were called *kiriole*—stanzas as foreign to reason as to rhyme. In the tumultuous crowd that made its way to the chapter church on Whit Monday, the parish of Saint-Maurice, situated at the foot of the Ballon, was bound to offer the canonesses a plate of snow; failing snow, two perfectly white oxen; failing oxen, a sum of money fixed by decree of the sovereign court of Nancy.

At Port-Royal, the nuns' disinterestedness equaled their humility. A dowry of eighty thousand francs could not persuade them to accept as a professed nun a lady of rank (Madame de Crèvecœur) who pressed earnestly for admission and who already wore the novice's habit.

The most touching hospitality was practiced down to the smallest detail. The nuns even extended their charity to other monasteries. In 1693 they sold a silver-gilt chalice to assist the English Benedictine nuns of Paris, who were in distress.[9]

Idleness was utterly banished from Port-Royal; all the nuns worked—some in the pharmacy, others cultivating the garden, weaving linen and serge, making cardboard, binding books.[10] Recreation consisted only of a change of occupation.

Never was there seen a greater simplicity of faith, a more complete detachment from earthly things, a stricter regularity of conduct, a more fervent piety—and one therefore as far removed from every singularity and affectation as from those vices so often, and not without cause, charged against convents of women. Most careful to gather, during the course of a fleeting life, good works for eternity, each of these nuns might have applied to herself what the monk Theodore once said to himself: "Poor Theodore, what good will it do you to be great and happy in this life, if you are not so in the next? It would be in vain for you to claim both these advantages at once; you cannot aspire to the one without renouncing the other. One does not pass from delight to delight when exchanging this life for that of the next world. You must therefore deprive yourself of the delights of this life, if you wish one day to be happy in heaven." They desired nothing but to remain unknown; the offices of authority within the

9 See *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal*, 7 vols., 8vo, Utrecht, 1742, vol. II, p. 153.
10 See *Lettres du P. Vincent Comblat à un évêque, sur le Monastère de Port-Royal*, p. 63.

house were a burden each dreaded and accepted only with reluctance. Union, trust, prayer, work, silence, and austerity tempered by boundless charity—such is the picture drawn by a great many contemporary writers, among them Racine, who in his history of Port-Royal acknowledges the certainty of the miracle worked upon Pascal's niece, cured of a lachrymal fistula by the touch of the Holy Thorn.

M. de Choiseul, Bishop of Tournai, recounted this miracle at considerable length in a book he wrote against the Atheists, and used it as a striking proof of the truth of religion. He went so far as to say that to doubt this miracle would be not merely stubbornness, but an extravagance, indeed a kind of madness. The learned Contenson, the Dominican, cites this event as fit to silence the most stubborn unbelievers. Nor should we forget the recent testimony Pope Benedict XIII gave it in his *Homilies on Exodus*, to prove that miracles have not ceased in the Church.

The authenticity of the cure of Madame La Fosse, in 1729, was attested with every formality capable of dispelling any suspicion of fraud. It underwent the rigorous examination of both medicine and philosophy, which together acknowledged its certainty. These facts won the assent of a great many celebrated men, whose names will be listed further on. What, then, does it matter, the disdainful sneer of certain people who, parading their unbelief and their wit, find it more convenient to sharpen an epigram than to verify and refute?

It happened more than once that women, brought to Port-Royal out of mere curiosity, were so moved by the virtues of this house that they came to wish to be received there themselves. Among them was the mother of Angélique Arnauld, who, wishing to make a general confession, wrote it out and sent it to her daughter for her advice.[11] The reformer's mother herself became a nun in a monastery where she already had six daughters, six nieces (daughters of Arnauld d'Andilly), and six or seven other relatives. In the world at large, three remarkable convents were spoken of as follows: the *Bourgeoises* of Saint-Antoine-des-Champs, the Ladies of Maubuisson, and the nuns of Port-Royal.[12]

The two monasteries of this name, that of the Fields and that of Paris, governed for a time by the same abbess, were once in perfect harmony as regards their regularity. But in 1665, intrigue having removed the Paris house from its dependence on that of the Fields, a complete

11 See Dom Clémencet, vol. II, pp. 210–211.
12 See *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire*, etc., vol. II, p. 292.

disparity of conduct appeared between them. In one reigned the most exemplary piety; in the other, a scandalous laxity, joined to the use of every device that cunning and hatred could suggest, in order to persecute Port-Royal des Champs and seize its property—a portion of which the Paris house had already extorted. One day, after the abbess of this latter house had given a ball in the parlor, Cardinal de Noailles remarked on the occasion: "It is hardly fair that Port-Royal de Paris should give the ball while Port-Royal des Champs pays the fiddlers."[13] This seized property was squandered, and its administration fell into such disorder that in 1725 the archbishop felt obliged to intervene with his authority, and found himself forced to bring suit against the nuns of Port-Royal de Paris.

Let us end this chapter with an excerpt from a work by Doctor Petit-Pied:[14]

> *There has never been a monastery in which regular discipline was better maintained. Never was a house seen that was holier, further removed from the corruption of the world, more attentive to the laws of the Church, more submissive to its pastors, more devoted to every rule. The vows of religious poverty were observed there in their fullest extent. The sisters possessed nothing of their own. Everything was held in common among them; and even in the use of these goods held in common, what admirable simplicity! What moderation! What aversion to ostentation and vanity! As long as it was permitted to receive young women to the religious profession, never was a rich dowry the price of the vow of poverty; and their house, ever closed to favor, to influential recommendation, to worldly interest, opened only to proven virtue and to a clearly recognized vocation.*
>
> *They were seen to be full of respect for the mothers—but a respect born of love and trust. They lived together in the most perfect harmony. Conversations with persons from outside were rare, never familiar, and always conducted under the eye of an assistant.*
>
> *One marveled at the profound silence that reigned in the house, at its earnest modesty, the uniformity of its exercises, its assiduous labor, its continual application to prayer, and the sweet and consoling tears that were its fruit; at readings that were equally pious and sound, far removed from any idle*

13 See Clémencet, vol. VII, p. 409.
14 See *Obedientiae Credulae Vana Religio*, Part II, chap. XI.

curiosity; at the alms poured abundantly into the laps of the poor. Life there was austere and frugal; sleep was short, vigils long and frequent, fasts maintained until evening; faith was pure, hope was alive, charity burned bright.

Within, the house was for the young women a school of virtue and piety; outside, it was surrounded by virtuous laypeople who exerted themselves courageously in the harshest works of penance. Alas, who can say how many saints were formed there, known to God alone, whose ashes lie hidden in that place until the day all things are revealed?

What shall I say of the public office of the church? What crowds, day and night! What constancy! What perseverance! What violence—to borrow Tertullian's expression—was done to God by the union of such fervent and ardent prayers! The sacred ceremonies were performed there with dignity, yet without pomp, and with an edifying simplicity. The singing was ravishing; one might have thought one heard angels. The voices were soft, clear, distinct, harmonious, and so moving that they brought one to tears, while at the same time filling the heart with joy and consolation.

The awful majesty of God could be felt in those holy places. Jesus Christ, present upon the altar, was adored without interruption. The holy mysteries were offered there with a sacred awe, full of religion and full of faith. The ardent love these pious women bore for Jesus Christ made them long ceaselessly to receive the Divine Eucharist often, with an eagerness and a fervor whose intensity was nevertheless sometimes held in check by a keen sense of humility and penitence.

O holy valley! O sacred dwelling! O ashes of the saints who rest in this place! What! He who should have been your father, who witnessed virtue so rare, and who even at times declared himself its defender—could he then have… But where does so sad a memory carry me?

The monastery of Port-Royal may have been overthrown, but posterity will know—what neither the passage of centuries nor the wickedness of men will ever erase—that this most holy house perished at last not through any crime that was committed, not through the ambition of its nuns, not through any

quarrel that arose among them, not through reckless spending, not through sumptuous buildings rashly undertaken, not through any relaxation of discipline, which for the hundred years it had been established there had remained ever the same; but, incredible as it may seem, through religious scruple and an unshakable attachment to Christian sincerity. A thing unheard of until our own day; and even if no written record of it remained, the very ruins of this place, so worthy of veneration, will, as it were, raise their voice and stand as eternal testimony.

But while trees so fruitful were thus being uprooted from the field of the Lord, might one not be permitted to say to the destroyers of Port-Royal what St. Bernard did not hesitate to write to Pope Innocent II: 'If this land is henceforth abandoned to barren and unfruitful trees, on whom shall I lay the blame, if not on him who holds and wields the axe?'

Chapter III Causes That Stirred Up the Enemies of All Good Against Port-Royal. Calumnies and Other Means Employed to Bring About Its Destruction

What we have just read leads naturally to a discussion of the causes that excited the hatred of the wicked against Port-Royal, the means employed to destroy it, the manner in which this was carried out, and the persecutions directed against anyone who had shown attachment to this monastery.

Perhaps no family was ever larger than that of the Arnaulds, nor brought together in all its members such piety, such genius, such love of everything good, and such firmness in carrying it out.[15] Yet this family, in spite of itself, became one of the causes that provoked the war against Port-Royal.

Antoine Arnauld, father of the doctor of that name, pleading on behalf of the University of Paris, had published in 1602 his *Franc et Véritable Discours* against the recall of the Jesuits to France, from which Henri IV had expelled them; they had retained a deep resentment of this. Du Verger de Hauranne, abbé de Saint-Cyran, in his *Petrus Aurelius*—adopted by the clergy of France—had treated them harshly, and the wound stung all the more because he had spoken the truth. He had refuted Father Garasse's *Somme théologique* by setting against it a "sum" of the errors and falsehoods contained in that rhapsody. A friend of Jansenius and of Doctor Arnauld, he had expressed his horror of the Pelagian errors of Molina; and since he did not know how to bend his principles to please the great, being immune to both flattery and threats, he had displeased Cardinal Richelieu, whose efforts to procure the divorce of Louis XIII's brother, Gaston d'Orléans, from his second wife he disapproved of. Saint-Cyran had above all censured the doctrine of attrition found in the Catechism of Luçon, published by the cardinal—who had him imprisoned while nevertheless acknowledging him to be a saint and a scholar.

Arnauld's book on frequent communion struck head-on at the laxity which the Jesuits perpetuated right up to their suppression—witness the work of their Father Pichon. Arnauld published the *Morale Pratique des Jésuites*, and made friends of good morals shudder at the excesses of the casuists, whose apology a Father Pirot had published in 1657. The success of

15 D. Bernard, Epist. 147.

Pascal's *Lettres Provinciales* proved that a good book is a power in itself. Pascal had also said, speaking of the slanders directed against Port-Royal: "This place, which men sought to present as the temple of the devil, God has made His own temple."[16] Father d'Avrigny maintains that it was wrong to attribute exclusively to the Jesuits opinions common to other theologians as well.[17] To this it has been answered that at the very least such opinions were far more numerous within his order, that the order shielded those who held them whenever they were attacked, and that through the weight of its influence and its intrigues it sought to make their doctrine prevail and to set itself up as the arbiter of belief and opinion.

The works of the Port-Royalists just mentioned, and many others dictated by sound morals and good taste and published by the solitaries who will be discussed further on, were read avidly and admired by the public; they aroused the jealousy of the Jesuits—and from jealousy to hatred is no great distance. From that point a line was drawn between two formidable parties; from it arose the names of Jansenists and Molinists, as famous as those of Guelfs and Ghibellines; sometimes hatred concealed itself beneath the mask of religious zeal.

In the time of the League we saw the ambition of the Guises; in our own day we have seen the ambition of the clergy and the nobility cloak itself under the same pretexts. Religion, then, as a certain pope once said, must be very pure indeed, since crime has so often sought to borrow her features. There is a class of men who will not fail to conclude from this that religion ought to be destroyed. By the same reasoning one might as well uproot the vines from our hillsides, forbid the use of iron, abolish the courts of justice, or outlaw virtue in order to prevent drunkenness, murder, chicanery, and hypocrisy.

In their writings and in their conduct, the Port-Royalists displayed that Christian inflexibility which clings, so to speak, to the principles of doctrine and morals without ever deviating. The doctrine of the Jesuits, more accommodating, allowed for compromises. Thirty of their casuists, reassuring consciences on the authority of some "grave doctor" (and every one of them wished to be considered such), had widened a road which the Gospel tells us is so narrow. Everyone knows Boileau's verses on Escobar, who, in order to reach heaven, had found a road paved with velvet. It is easy to see how, by this very means, they came to enjoy at court a credit they coveted. The following anecdote is worth recalling.

16 Sixteenth Provincial Letter.
17 See his *Mémoires Chronologiques pour servir à l'Histoire ecclésiastique*, under the year 1656.

Louis XIV, anxious to know whether he might impose the tithe upon a people already burdened with taxes—part of which flowed into the laps of the monarch's mistresses—consulted the successor of Father La Chaise in the post of royal confessor. Le Tellier procured for him a consultation from certain Sorbonne doctors, stating that all the property of his subjects belonged to the king, and that he was merely taking back what was already his.[18] Were these casuists doctors of Israel, or prophets of Baal?

From what has just been read, the causes that roused a powerful faction against a monastery of women are already laid bare. Were they accused of any crimes? No—their house was a school of wisdom; and neither among the nuns nor among the solitaries of Port-Royal was anyone ever charged with an act contrary to good morals. Even the servants and workmen attached to this house showed by their edifying conduct that they lived in an atmosphere of virtue. History has not thought it beneath itself to record the deeds of several of them. History, which down through the centuries carries so many bad examples and so few good ones, renders a greater service to mankind in recounting the life of Innocent Fai, a servant at Port-Royal, than in echoing down to us the crimes of Alexander and of Caesar.

The works of the solitaries of Port-Royal had angered their enemies. This was the true motive that spurred them on to have a house destroyed which was a refuge of piety—while in Paris the very dens of debauchery were tolerated. Several times the nuns were expelled and then reinstated. Péréfixe, Archbishop of Paris, one of their persecutors, went there in person in 1664 and carried off twelve nuns; the captain of the watch, who that same morning had been present at the execution of notorious criminals and in the afternoon at the scattering of these holy women, cited these two events, occurring on the same day, as a remarkable coincidence. To carry them off, he said, there had been no need of his men at all, "for they are lambs."[19] Mother de Brégy, after a fairly long captivity away from Port-Royal, having obtained permission to return, came upon one of her sisters in Paris; she fell to her knees and embraced her, saying: "What—to remain faithful to God and to see one another again! Ah, that is too much grace; we do not deserve it."[20]

Slander employed every device to blacken Port-Royal. The Fable of Bourg-Fontaine, the Fraud of Douai with its tale of the False Arnauld, the falsification of the medal struck for the peace of

18 See *Histoire de la Régence du duc d'Orléans*, by Marmontel, 2 vols., 12mo, Paris, 1805, vol. I, p. 148.
19 Clémencet, vol. IV, p. 445.
20 Ibid.

Clement IX, and a hundred other inventions of this kind, attest to the fertility of hatred. A Jesuit, Father Meynier, wrote a book to prove that Port-Royal was in league with Geneva against the doctrine of the Real Presence—while these nuns, by the very nature of their institute and by their particular calling, devoted to the perpetual adoration of Jesus Christ present in the Eucharist, lay prostrate night and day before the holy altars; while Arnauld was publishing *La Perpétuité de la foi*, in which the certainty of the eucharistic dogma is set forth with full clarity; while that same Arnauld, Nicole, and their friends were singled out, by their own writings, as the most formidable enemies of Calvinism.

The enemies of Port-Royal, refuted and disgraced on every front, resorted to other means.

The French court had been prejudiced against Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, author of the famous *Mars Gallicus*, a work intended to defend the King of Spain and to condemn the alliance of the King of France with the Protestants of Holland. Its thirteenth chapter ridicules the supposed right of the Kings of France to cure scrofula by touch—a right also claimed by the kings of England, just as the kings of Hungary claimed to cure jaundice. This struck at royal power and wounded royal pride at the same time.

The same bishop had published the *Augustinus*, of which there are several editions—one from Paris, one from Rouen, and one from Louvain. Attempts were made to force nuns to sign a declaration that five condemned propositions—which no one in fact upheld—were to be found in a large Latin volume by a foreign prelate, a book they were unable to read. Such a demand, imposed upon young women, belongs in the archives of madness; all they asked was to be permitted to remain silent on a matter of which they had no knowledge.

Their resistance to the formulary of Alexander VII foreshadowed what their attitude would be toward the bull *Vineam Domini Sabaoth*, published in 1705, in which Clement XI decided what had not been asked of him, and failed to decide what had been asked; for he declared that respectful silence did not suffice with regard to decisions on matters of doctrine—whereas the question at issue was whether it sufficed with regard to decisions on matters of fact. In the Assembly of the Clergy, Cardinal de Noailles requested that this bull be received only by way of formal judgment, as right and custom authorized the bishops to do—bishops who, on various occasions, have asserted their right to judge before, with, and after the pope. Moreover, it is a settled principle that the pope cannot judge in first instance a matter arising

in France, nor without having heard the party accused. "The authority of bishops," said d'Aguesseau, "becomes nothing but an empty title, if the pope can come here and perform their functions himself."[21] The Assembly of 1705 accordingly appointed a commission headed by the Archbishop of Rouen—a step that greatly angered Rome. Happy would the Gallican Church be, had its prelates never fallen short of that noble firmness which knows how to preserve respect for the head of the Church while remaining fixed upon the line that separates legitimate authority from its abuse.

The nuns, so cruelly mistreated, were on their guard, says one author, against those captious signatures so often presented to them in a solitude under constant watch, which no one could approach without risking exile, and sometimes prison. On this occasion Euphémie, Pascal's sister, wrote: "When bishops show the courage of girls, it is fitting that girls show the courage of bishops; if it is not for us to defend the truth, it is at least for us to die for the truth."[22] It was doubtless this that led Harlay, Archbishop of Paris—whose name is not inscribed in the Annals of Virtue—to remark: "Those girls are as virtuous as angels and as proud as demons."

In the ninth century, under Leo the Isaurian, when so many men who ought to have been pillars of the Church allowed themselves to be swept into error, the iconoclasts vented the same fury against a monastery of thirty virgins, persecuted for having upheld the veneration of images. St. Theodore the Studite wrote to them from his prison to praise their zeal and exhort them to perseverance.[23] This letter offers friends of Port-Royal a comparison striking in every detail.

A vicar-general of Paris, having gone to preach blind obedience to the archbishop's orders at Port-Royal, said to Mother Christine Briquet: "The steps of this altar are of white marble; if my prelate assured me they were black, I would believe it." "You would be wrong," she replied, "for your believing it would not change their color."

The nuns, deprived of counsel because every line of communication between them and anyone who might have advised them was intercepted, submissive to the Church, attached to the Holy See, yet knowing—as every Frenchman worthy of the name knows—that infallibility is the prerogative of no single individual, and that the Church, the sole infallible tribunal, stands

21 See vol. XIII of the Chancellor's Works, p. 330.
22 Clémencet, vol. IV, p. 169.
23 See Baronius, vol. IX, ad ann. 816, nos. 20, 21, and 22; and Clémencet, vol. IV, p. 472 and following. *Histoire de Port-Royal*, by Besogne, vol. VI, p. 226.

above even her visible head; worn down by vexations, they appealed several times against the ordinance of the Archbishop of Paris to the primacy of Lyon, whose official refused even to receive their petition (the prelate then occupying the foremost see of Gaul was no Montazet). Unable to obtain justice from men, in a fit of desolation they drew up a power of attorney in the form of a letter and placed it in the coffin of one of their deceased sisters, so as to carry their plea before the tribunal of God.

Le Tellier at last achieved the goal his order had so ardently desired:

> *Louis XIV, who wished to save his soul, and who, knowing nothing of religion, had flattered himself all his life that he could do penance on the backs of others, now proposed to do it on the backs of the Huguenots and the Jansenists, whom he considered almost equally heretical.*
>
> *The king was surrounded by people as ignorant as himself—Madame de Maintenon, Beauvilliers, Chevreuse; by courtiers and chief valets who knew no better, or who thought only of their own fortunes; by a clergy long since corrupted, and lately by a Godet des Marais, Bishop of Chartres, who had filled the episcopate with ignorant men who regarded the pope as a god and held the maxims of the Gallican Church in horror, simply because they knew nothing of antiquity, etc.*[24]

One must be indignant, though one cannot be surprised, that in such a state of affairs Le Tellier obtained from Louis XIV the decree of destruction. In punishing the nuns, the aim was to punish their celebrated friends who had exposed the Jesuits—men driven, says Marmontel, by a savage jealousy of Port-Royal, whose crime was that of forming great men.[25] The latter were more skilled in theology; the former, more skilled in politics.

24 See his *Histoire de la Régence*, vol. I, p. 5.
25 See the *Mémoires* of the Duc de Saint-Simon.

Chapter IV Destruction of Port-Royal. Present State of the Ruins of This Monastery

D'Argenson, lieutenant of police and friend of the Jesuits, was charged with executing the decree of proscription. He left the capital on the night of October 28–29, 1709, and came to invest the house with three hundred men. Tyranny has, in every age, used the same tactics. By this show of force the public was meant to believe that there was some revolt within this monastery, whereas only submission was to be found there. The whole business amounted to removing twenty-two poor nuns, elderly and most of them infirm. For the last time they went to the choir at the hour of Tierce—the hour at which the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles—and invoked Him for themselves and for their persecutors...

In an instant they were torn from their refuge; they were scarcely given time to take away the smallest thing with them. They bore their fate without complaint, with courage, and asked nothing for themselves; they confined themselves to recommending to d'Argenson a poor infirm woman who had been attached to the house for fifty years, and another who had served Mademoiselle des Vertus. Then they fell to their knees, asked one another's forgiveness, encouraged one another, urged one another to unity and to mutual prayer, and bade one another farewell until eternity—for they would not see one another again except there.

The next day a crowd of poor people, who habitually received soup and bread at the monastery, gathered on the nearby heights, sobbing and crying out: "What is to become of us?"

What remained of the monastery's property—the part not already seized by Port-Royal de Paris—was awarded to that house, on condition that it pay for the maintenance of the nuns in the various convents to which they were to be deported. But since the two Port-Royals were utterly opposed in spirit and conduct, sharing nothing but a name, the result was the greatest negligence in these payments, so that the exiled nuns found themselves in frightful want.

To this torment add the insults they endured from the fanatics among whom they had been exiled; for nothing had been spared to prolong their martyrdom. Bertier, first bishop of Blois, refused the sacraments and Catholic burial to the prioress, exiled to that city, where she died in 1716—because this woman refused to sign a statement her conscience would have given the

lie to. "It will be thought that there was puerility and folly on both sides," writes one author, "but granting that, one will also see, on the one side, the malice and rage of demons, and on the other, the steadfastness of heroes and the purity of angels."[26] Had Caumartin, the immediate successor to Bishop Bertier and a man of a very different spirit, been living at that time, instead of condemning the deceased he would have praised her courage and her virtues. Another nun of Port-Royal having died around the same time in the same town, her funeral rites were refused; they contented themselves with saying a low Mass. The same inconsistency occurred at the burial of the last abbess, Mother Boulard[27]—her obsequies were celebrated, but without the ringing of bells. If these women were heretics, every prayer and every ceremony ought to have been withheld; if they were not, they ought to have been treated as any other of the faithful. But iniquity deceives even itself; and in our own day, following the disputes over the oath required by the Constituent Assembly, have we not seen the same contradictions repeated a hundred times over? While in Paris solemn funerals were held for actors, and for an astronomer who had professed atheism his whole life, at Nancy a frenzied clergy, heaping insult upon religion and upon the episcopate in the mortal remains of the venerable prelate Nicolas, drew down upon itself the just indignation of the civil authorities, and scandalized true Christians—whose friendship follows a man beyond the bounds of life, and who have since erected a monument to a bishop revered both as pastor and as citizen.

In Mother Boulard's epitaph, in speaking of the trials she had been made to suffer, an allusion to a passage of Scripture recalled that she had been persecuted by the devil and sifted like wheat on the threshing floor. An order was obtained from the king to have this phrase erased.

On January 25, 1710, the court ordered the demolition. Duclos, in his *Mémoires*, says it was carried out with the fury one would direct against a rebel city, and the outrage one would display against a den of vice. As though the very walls were complicit in the wrongs imputed to the nuns, an immense and magnificent building—which had cost perhaps more than a million and a half francs, and which common sense suggested could have served as a hospice or a manufactory—was razed to the ground.

26 See the new edition of Racine's *Works*, vol. VI, p. 468.
27 See the *Necrology of Port-Royal*, p. 122.

The garrison left at Port-Royal after the expulsion of the nuns had brought with it drunkenness, and had committed acts of pillage and desecration, which reached their height in 1711, at the time of the exhumation.

Around the outer wall of certain cemeteries in various countries one finds inscribed the words "Time is before you," and on the inside, "Time is behind you." In the cemetery of the nuns of Port-Royal were two lines, often repeated, which are not very poetic, but which call to mind great truths:

> *All these dead once lived; you who live, will die,*
> *That dreadful day draws near, though you give it no thought.*

It has been calculated that, since the year 1204, the date of the foundation, supposing only six deaths a year, the cemetery contained the remains of at least three thousand bodies. These virgins, says one author, who in life had shunned the gaze of men, were after death exposed to the lewd stares of shameless men, who, uttering vile remarks, hacked into pieces bodies that were only half-decayed, while in the church itself dogs devoured flesh and fought over the scraps. These venerable remains were transported to various cemeteries—in Paris, at Saint-Lambert, at Palaiseau, at Magny, and elsewhere. It is at Magny that, in recent years, the tombstone of Arnauld d'Andilly was found, bearing this touching inscription: Sub sole vanitas, supra solem veritas—below the sun, vanity; above the sun, truth.

The fury of Port-Royal's enemies has been compared to that of the children of Edom against Jerusalem: "O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance; they have defiled Your temple.[28] Destroy, they said, destroy it to its foundations.[29]" Hatred had set itself relentlessly against the very stones of this house. Next came the Archbishop of Beaumont, who tore out almost the last of its foundations: he obtained permission to use the rubble to build an aqueduct to channel water from springs situated above the pond. The tenant farmer complained of the inconveniences caused by this aqueduct, which cost the treasury of the économats eighty thousand francs.

What remains of these ruins? Shall I speak of a few stretches of wall that once formed the enclosure of the convent, on which were inscribed a multitude of names along with the verse Super flumina Babylonis, etc.? Shall I speak of a few very solid vaults, built to drain off the

28 *Deus, venerunt gentes in hereditatem tuam*, p. 78.
29 *Exinanite, exinanite*, etc., Ps. 136–137.

dampness and make a marshy site habitable? What does it matter that the mill is still standing, along with the miller's dwelling?

The house once inhabited, five centuries ago, by St. Thibaut, a solitary of this region, had been rebuilt; it now serves as a sheepfold.

The house of M. de Sainte-Marthe has become a barn; cattle graze on the site of the convent and the church. It is presumed that the ground still conceals many graves from which the bodies were never exhumed. Clematis, ivy, and brambles grow over this ruin; a sallow tree raises its trunk in the middle of what was once the choir.

A few toises away one finds the cellars and a few remnants of the Hôtel de Longueville, built by the duchess of that name, who, in this retreat, surrounded by her family, practiced every austerity of penance, and somehow knew how to make them seem lovable. The author of the curious work Intrigue du Cabinet, etc., Anquetil, attributes Madame de Longueville's retirement to her taste for intrigue rather than to piety.[30] This claim seems rash when one considers this lady's unwavering conduct thereafter. Is it in the nature of the passions to flee the very stage of intrigue, when one wishes to intrigue?

Here the following anecdote naturally finds its place: Madame de Longueville, in a moment of ill humor against the king, spoke of him in a manner that was indiscreet and lacking in respect. A single man who overheard her hastened to repeat it to the monarch, who complained bitterly of it to the duchess's brother. He assured the king that this could not be so. "I will believe her own word for it," said Louis XIV, "if she says otherwise." Meanwhile the duchess's brother hurried to his sister, who confessed everything. He tried to persuade her to deny it. "What," she said, "should I mend my fault with a greater one? The informer was wrong, but that does not give me the right to make him out a liar." At once she went and told the king the whole truth herself—who, from that time on, gave Madame de Longueville repeated proofs of his esteem.[31]

Below the building just described is a fine spring called the Fountain of Mother Angélique. On the opposite slope is the place called the Désert, which formed part of the convent's enclosure; it was there that the nuns held their conferences. A few stretches of wall still

30 Vol. IV, p. 250.

31 See *La véritable vie d'Eude-Geneviève de Longueville* (by the Abbé de Villefore), 12mo, Amsterdam, 1735, vol. II, p. 60 and following.

support the terraces of this retreat, of which Mademoiselle Horthemels made a fine engraving.

About 200 meters further on (100 toises), on the right, one finds the ruins of the Château de Vaumurier, built by Louis-Charles d'Albert, Duc de Luynes. There he lived a life of piety, and gathered scholars for ecclesiastical conferences, one result of which was, among other things, the translation of the New Testament known as the Mons New Testament, so called because it was printed in that city. He made a gift of this building to Port-Royal, and it later became an inn. The Dauphin, son of Louis XIV, having gone hunting in the area, resolved to ask the king for it, in order to install there a person he loved. Mother Angélique de Saint-Jean, the abbess, having been warned of this, at once sent workmen to demolish it. The king, on learning the reason, applauded her action.

This château formed a square pavilion surrounded by moats that were never filled in. Around its perimeter run hedges of lilac mixed with grapevines left to grow wild, which are said still to produce excellent Chasselas grapes. The kitchens and cellars still exist; they could have served as a refuge for some of the unfortunate persecuted under the Revolutionary regime, all the more so as they are very dry and situated in a position that hides them from view.

Further on, at a distance of about a kilometer (500 toises), stands the small church of Saint-Lambert. To its cemetery various bodies exhumed from the abbey were transferred, among them that of Hamon, the model of penitents and the comforter of the poor. Four stones placed at the corners of the grave have never been disturbed; they call for the respect both of the Christians whom piety, and of the scholars whom curiosity, bring to this region. The church itself, which has nothing remarkable about it, has always inspired more piety than the chapel at Versailles. To the right of the high altar stands another altar, said to have been brought from Port-Royal at the time of its destruction. It is of crude workmanship, its figures in very poor taste, but the intent of those who, in the time of the Terror, mutilated them is no less criminal for that.

In 1711 a plan was put forward for the reestablishment of Port-Royal. Cardinal de Noailles, to whom the memorandum was referred, paid it no attention whatsoever.[32] *And yet he was*

32 See the *Necrology of Port-Royal*, Preface, p. 6.

consumed with remorse from the moment when, through cowardly weakness, he had served the vengeance of Port-Royal's enemies by subscribing to its destruction. One day, yielding to repeated entreaties, he resolved to visit the ruins of this house: at their approach, at the sight of them, he burst into tears. It was on this occasion that the words—often repeated since, and later applied to the Jesuits—were spoken, that the stones of Port-Royal were falling back upon him. The act of weakness he had to reproach himself with poisoned the rest of his life: this is the inevitable punishment of all those who, otherwise endowed like him with valuable qualities, lack character.

The Revolution having nationalized the property of religious houses, the site where Port-Royal had stood was sold along with some adjoining land, as well as a house at Saint-Lambert, inhabited by its owner—and once inhabited by the learned Tillemont, who used to rest from his literary labors by conversing with the good country folk, whose ideas he sought to develop and whose affections he sought to refine. One remembers his questions to children minding oxen and horses: "How is it that you, who are so small, can drive at will animals which, by their numbers and their strength, far surpass you?" Their answers led him on to bring out the superiority of man, endowed with a rational soul capable of rising, through love, toward the Author of all things.

Thus perished, after 505 years of existence, a monastery that might have served as a model for all others; it was destroyed by a prince who had persecuted the Protestants, and who, both libertine and devout, never had the courage to rise to true piety.

The following anecdote is so strange that it forces one to doubt it.

The persecutor of Saint-Cyran, the protector of the doctrine of attrition, the proud Cardinal de Richelieu, was not immune to remorse; at times it seized him so violently, and his fear of damnation was so great, that, to set his mind at rest, he required Lescot, his confessor, to give him a written document assuring him of his salvation. This doctor gave it to him. Truly, only one step remained, and soon insurance offices for the next world might have been established. The cardinal carried this paper about with him always, as a safeguard against the wrath of God, guaranteed by his confessor. The latter, it is said, held his own "passport"

to be somewhat suspect—for no sooner was the cardinal dead than he hastened to retrieve the paper.[33]

Louis XIV was no less troubled by remorse as he saw his end approaching. Let us listen to an author already cited:

> *He had proscribed all liberty, even taking it away from the most saintly and most orthodox consciences.*[34] *His piety appeared so alarmed, on his deathbed, on the subject of the persecutions, that he expressed his regret over them to Cardinals de Rohan and de Bissy. He offered to remedy whatever harm he might have done, and asked them to tell him frankly whether there had been any element of personal passion in their conduct; he declared that he would have no reluctance to see Cardinal de Noailles. But Le Tellier, who was watching the last movements of the king's heart, smothered this remnant of kindness by telling him that if he received the cardinal, he would in a single moment destroy the work of his whole life; and one of the other cardinals added that he could not see the Archbishop of Paris without renouncing everything he had done. Cardinal de Noailles never saw the king in these last moments. But Louis XIV, wishing to express what he felt in his heart, declared that he had always loved and esteemed him. He refused Cardinal de Bissy's request that he sign yet another declaration against Jansenism, and said to him these words: 'I have done everything I could to bring about peace among you: I have not been able to achieve it; I pray God may grant it to you.' Thus the bed of the dying king was troubled, just as the end of his reign had been, by that spirit of party which had made his old age so stormy.*

More inclined to splendor than to usefulness, corrupted by luxury, by libertinism, by flattery, by absolute power, he had allowed himself to be governed by Madame de Maintenon, who, being a friend of the Duc du Maine, sought to raise the king's bastard children to the highest honors. In his final moments he was abandoned both by her and by his own legitimate sons.[35] For long years, under his reign, France had been covered at once with the laurels of victory and the rags of poverty. He died laden with the praises of poets and the hatred of his peoples.

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33 See the *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Port-Royal* (by Besogne), 8vo, Cologne, 1752, vol. II, p. 434. The author tells this anecdote on the authority of Herman.

34 Saint-Simon, vol. 6, p. 159.

35 Vol. VI, pp. 177, 159.

Chapter V Destruction of Other Monasteries Accused of Holding the Same Views as Port-Royal des Champs. Persecution Throughout France

The relief model of Port-Royal, and a collection of prints depicting its various aspects, can still occasionally be found in the cabinets of collectors. They are rare, because the fury that destroyed Port-Royal did not spare these prints either. Everything that could be seized was taken from Mademoiselle Horthemels, who had engraved them. How did the paintings by Champaigne escape, now housed in the Museum of Arts—one of which is a Last Supper in which, under the features of Jesus Christ and the apostles, he painted the solitaries of Port-Royal; the other a portrait of the painter's eldest daughter, a nun at Port-Royal de Paris?

The author of the *Dictionnaire des livres jansénistes* believes one may keep in one's home images of Arius, Mahomet, Luther, and Calvin, but not those of Jansenius, Quesnel, and Soanen.[36] The same author would have us be suspicious of every book in which the order of the Mass, with the canon, appears in French[37]—and some zealots banned them outright, buying copies only to burn them, in imitation of what was done on September 8, 1710, in the Jesuit chapel at Orléans, where several works of Port-Royal were solemnly torn apart. This event became the subject of a satirical piece entitled *Petition of the Executioner of Orléans*, who complained that his function—that of carrying out capital sentences—had been usurped by others.[383] Persecution spread throughout all of France, touching property, fortunes, and persons; for Le Tellier was not a man to stop on so promising a path. He and his Society could think of Port-Royal only with dread—for, as one writer put it, it still throbbed with life even though its buildings had been razed and its tombs profaned. General indignation seemed to the Jesuits a sign that this monastery might soon rise again, unless they hastened to crush all its remaining partisans. The act of weakness they had wrung from Cardinal de Noailles, by exploiting his candor and his virtue, was not enough for them. In their eyes he bore the indelible fault of having received the cardinal's purple without their having had any part in it. Le Tellier did not give up hope of stripping him of his see, of all his dignities, and of his liberty. On the other hand, Madame de Maintenon, egged on by Cardinal de Bissy, in turn pressed the king toward all the acts of violence then being carried out against people's

36 *Dictionnaire des livres jansénistes*, 1752 ed., vol. II, p. 96.
37 Ibid., vol. I, p. 214.
38 See *Les Sarcellades*, vol. II, p. 135.

consciences. The favorite's power was such that it dominated even the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs; and, on Bissy's suggestion, Le Tellier was reduced to consulting her even on the distribution of benefices. This deference weighed cruelly upon him, but he dared not offend a woman whose influence he needed in order to continue his persecutions.

Various monasteries, reformed on the model of Port-Royal, were harassed or suppressed—among others at Orléans and at Toulouse. At the latter, the establishment founded by Madame de Mondonville was destroyed and slandered by Morenas; Reboulet and Juillard gave it, the one a history, the other a novel.

D'Alembert, in an anonymous pamphlet, reproaches those he calls "Jansenists" for grieving more over the destruction of the Filles de l'Enfance and of the Sainte-Barbe community than over the massacres of Cabrières and Mérindol.[39] This shows nothing but a desire to land a sarcastic blow. Had d'Alembert put the matter to those he accuses, they would have answered that these events, being of a very different nature, are not such as can be compared to one another—but that both kinds deserve tears.

Special mention is owed to the abbey of Saint-Polycarpe, of the Order of St. Benedict, founded at the end of the eighth century or the beginning of the ninth, in a deep valley half a myriameter from Limoux, diocese of Alet. Port-Royal had fallen in 1709; Saint-Polycarpe rose again in 1712 through the efforts of the Abbé de la Fite-Marca, who succeeded in establishing the reform there. This monastery became a nursery of saints, for whom Souillac, Bishop of Lodève, felt a deep attachment. Under the pretext of Jansenism, in 1741 the monks were forbidden to receive novices, with the persistent intention—once death had carried off most of the religious—of seeking outright suppression, which finally occurred in 1772 with the consent of Dillon, Archbishop of Narbonne. The last solitary of this abbey, Dom Pierre, going to church at two in the morning on April 6, 1772, to recite his office, was murdered by the gardener and several other wretches whose benefactor he had been; the guilty parties were broken on the wheel. One reads with edification two anonymous histories of this monastery, one by Dom Clémencet[40], the other by M. Regnault, parish priest of Vaux, diocese of Auxerre, who died in 1796 and had been a student at this house. He is the author of several works, particularly against the Convulsionnaires and against the thesis of the Abbé de Prades.

39 See *Lettre à M... conseiller au parlement, pour servir de Supplément à l'ouvrage sur la destruction des Jésuites*, 1767.

40 *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Polycarpe*, 1779.

The fall of Port-Royal was the signal given to every fanatic; hence so many arbitrary acts, never checked, never punished; hence so many devices to win over or intimidate bishops, priests, and schools—then handed over to the Jesuits and to two or three other congregations which, through crass ignorance, knew how to shield themselves from the dangers of knowledge that "puffeth up." Whoever showed courage was overwhelmed with disgust, threatened, proscribed; whoever aspired to office attained it only insofar as he bent beneath the yoke and crawled before the dominant faction—and since, as ambitious men and flatterers swarm in every country, one ought to be deeply grieved, though not surprised, that the episcopate, the abbeys, and the parishes nearly all fell prey to the triumphant party. A clergy animated by the spirit of Port-Royal would never have consented to the consecration of the regent's favorite, Cardinal Dubois—the disgrace of the episcopate, to whom the pope had instantly granted his bulls. Cardinal de Noailles refused, but Rohan, Bishop of Strasbourg, was found willing. That see, having become in some sense a family benefice, might perhaps in our own day have furnished a similar consecrator. At this ceremony—let us rather call it this profanation, a kind of festival held at the Val-de-Grâce—one of our most celebrated orators took part; it is an indelible blot on the life of Massillon.

Truth, however, retained a multitude of defenders in every order of the state; and even the parlements, the subordinate courts, and a host of laymen intrepidly defended the Gallican liberties, the true principles of Christian morality and canon law, trampled underfoot by so many men clothed in the priesthood. This contrast was nothing new: in former times one had seen Vincent, a Protestant minister, write a book against balls and dances, at the very time when a Father d'Estrade, a Jesuit, was writing an apology for them—just as in our own day a layman (Clément de Boissy) has been seen writing against the theater, while an Abbé de Fontenai, a former Jesuit priest, advertised every theatrical performance on his playbills. His supporters may perhaps lean on the authority of Fénelon, who allowed the Duc de Bourgogne to attend the theater in order to please his father, and who was willing that Madame la Vidame should keep a little opera and comedy.[41] That the Archbishop of Cambrai painted the grotto of Calypso, approved of opera, and censured the Jansenists—there is nothing contradictory in that; but is this not the occasion to recall that great examples do not destroy

41 See M. de Beausset's *Histoire de Fénélon*, 5 vols., 8vo, Paris, 1808, vol. III, pp. 123 and 458.

strong arguments to the contrary? This is the substance of the reply Bossuet himself made to Louis XIV on this very point.

The learned Bishop of Meaux, in his *Élévations à Dieu sur les Mystères*, after speaking of those who, like the Pharisees, wish to bend the law through erroneous doctrines and false probabilities, adds: "Cupidity resolves cases of conscience... Regularity is taken for rigor; it is given the name of a sect, and the rule can no longer make itself heard."[42] This fine passage, applicable to what precedes, applies no less to what follows.

It is known that certain theologians went to great lengths to save men without requiring that they love God. Sirmond the younger had even put forward the blasphemous claim that it is not so much commanded to love God as it is forbidden to hate Him.[43] It was doubtless on this occasion that a certain vicar-general, who later became Bishop of Autun, remarked: "*Diliges Dominum Deum* has thrown the whole Church into confusion."

A schoolmaster was exiled and forbidden to teach anywhere in France for having taught the children in his catechism class that one must love God if one wishes to be reconciled with Him.[44]

The learned Noël Alexandre, a Dominican, received a pension from the clergy, from which the Assembly of 1723 cut two hundred livres in order to give them to a cobbler named Neulet, the factotum of the Molinist party.

Some men enjoyed such credit with the public that no one dared risk violent measures against them—such was Colbert, Bishop of Montpellier. Under his name a false pastoral letter was circulated, in which he was made to appeal from every judgment to that of God alone, as though he recognized no tribunal on earth with the right to judge him. He was forced to publish a genuine *Lettre pastorale*[45] in order to expose this falsehood and unmask men who were furious at finding nothing to criticize either in his writings or in his conduct.

Imposture has shown the same effrontery in recent years, by publishing supposed pastoral letters from the venerable Thuin, Bishop of Meaux; Raymond, Bishop of Grenoble; and Berdolet, Bishop of Colmar—letters in which the first was made to retract his views, and the others to consent to transferring Sunday observance to the *décadi*. A hundred similar frauds

42 *Élévations à Dieu sur les Mystères*, by Bossuet, Part II, 18th Elevation of the 18th Week, p. 212.
43 See the *Provinciales*, and Sirmond in his book *Défense de la vertu*, Treatise II, sect. I, ch. II or III.
44 See Legros, *Discours sur les Nouvelles ecclésiastiques*, no. 29.
45 See the *Œuvres de Colbert, évêque de Montpellier*, vol. II, p. 215 and following.

could be cited, dating from our own day, arising under circumstances similar to those of the Port-Royal affair, and produced by men of the same stamp and moved by the same principles. Quite recently, in a journal entitled *Mélanges de philosophie, d'histoire*, etc., the learned Schwarzel, professor at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau, was slandered by being made the author of a work that lacks nothing—except existence.[46] In fact he had just published, under the patronage of the Prince Primate, who holds him in great esteem, an excellent treatise on the necessity of restoring church councils.[47] The subject of this treatise no doubt displeases a certain sect of obscurantists—as they are called in Germany—superstitious through ignorance, fanatical on principle, devoted to Roman curial interests out of self-interest, slanderers by system, and Pharisees by habit, whom the Bavarian government has since expelled.

Soanen, Bishop of Senez, did not get off as lightly as the Bishop of Montpellier; he was tried before an assembly presided over by Cardinal de Tencin, Archbishop of Embrun. An excellent memorandum signed by twenty canon lawyers challenged the competence of the judges, the substance of the charge, and the form of the trial. Reader, if you know your history, set beside the modest virtues of the Bishop of Senez the conduct of the cardinal, by way of contrast.

The famous Law, wishing to become a Catholic for reasons that had nothing to do with religion, needed to find an accommodating man who could, on the spot, turn a heretic, a thief of others' property, and the husband of an abducted woman, into a Catholic. Tencin worked this miracle—and then turned a Catholic into a heretic by declaring suspended from his functions.[48] Soanen, who had challenged him as guilty of simony, along with the other prelates, on the grounds that they had publicly given their judgment before the trial had even opened. Let us not forget another anecdote concerning one of the prelates who sat on that tribunal.

The Bishop of Grenoble, in conferring orders on some Savoyards, had made them sign the formulary. Following complaints from the Bishop of Nice, it was agreed that the Bishop of Grenoble would go to Chambéry to perform an ordination without any mention of signatures. Thus, at Senez one was a heretic for signing while distinguishing between matters of right and matters of fact, while at Chambéry one was a Catholic for refusing to sign at all.

46 See *Mélanges de philosophie*, vol. III, 36th issue.
47 See *Ueber die Nothwendigkeit der katholischen Kirchenversammlungen*, 8vo, Augsburg, 1807.
48 See the *Œuvres de Saint-Simon*, vol. X, etc.

As a result of the affairs concerning Port-Royal, arbitrary power silenced both justice and law. Clandestine harassment became a tool of government; espionage—so degrading to those who are its object, so debasing to those who practice it—was held in honor as in the times whose history Tacitus has recorded, and became a path to the dignities of the sanctuary. It is reckoned that from the beginning of the eighteenth century until around 1780, there were some fifty thousand *lettres de cachet*; and among those struck down by them are counted some fifteen hundred persons distinguished for their piety and their talents, who suffered for defending the truths of grace, the obligation to love God, and to refer all our actions to Him. Many celebrated men sought refuge toward Belgium; but even in that land the spirit of persecution reached them, and the immortal Van Espen, in 1728, at the age of eighty, was forced to flee to Holland, where he died at Amersfoort.

The congregations of Saint-Maur, the Oratory, the Christian Doctrine, etc., and a few seminaries, preserved sound learning; but elsewhere it declined rapidly, because a powerful faction, backed by political power, controlled education and the disposal of benefices. A multitude of good pastors were exiled, removed from office, and replaced by inept troublemakers. The diocese of Paris, more than any other, was a prey to desolation. Noailles had filled its posts with clergymen of merit; Vintimille, his successor, drove them out—though at bottom he cared little for the bull itself.

In France, unfortunately, many very serious disputes end in ridicule, and a man is held to be in the right as soon as he can make people laugh. Hence so many pamphlets on opposite sides —*Le Saint déniché*, *La Femme docteur*, the *Quakers français* by Bougeant, the *Philotanus*, the *Onguent pour la brûlure*, the *Enluminure de l'almanach*, and so on. Yet there are flecks of gold in this mire; one might wish that a man of taste, with enlightened critical judgment, would take the trouble to extract them, as has been attempted with the vast collection of the *Mazarinades*. A rather piquant anthology would result from such labor.

A goldsmith named Jouin addressed to M. de Vintimille a collection of light verse that went through several editions, though the poetry is well below mediocre—yet the satire is reasonably well sustained throughout. He entitled it *Les Sarcellades*. Here is the occasion for it.

The parish of Sarcelles, situated between Écouen and Saint-Denis, had a respectable parish priest appointed by Cardinal de Noailles, named Du Ruel. The Abbé Lebeuf credits him with an unpublished history of Senlis, his hometown, of which the manuscript has been lost. He had as his assistant a curate of the same stamp. They were expelled in 1729 and replaced by two worthless individuals, on whom the rhymester makes merry, mockingly congratulating M. de Vintimille for having rid the area of two men who were too austere—men who preached against theft, vengeance, drunkenness, and lust; whereas those put in their place are at least more accommodating, their theoretical and practical morality being better suited to the taste of the age.

In 1739, after an exile of ten years, Du Ruel was restored to the wishes of his parish.

Many revolutions bear features in common; one could even draw a parallel between what happened then and what is taking place before our eyes today. Throughout France, virtuous and learned clergymen bore the burden of the day and saved religion at the peril of their lives, amid the storms of the most atrocious persecution, while others—deserting their posts and abandoning their flocks—sat safely abroad, sheltered from the storm, and stirred up the powers of Europe against their own country.

It is related in chapter VIII of the Acts of the Apostles that, when persecution broke out, all the faithful fled except the pastors: here we have seen the reverse—the faithful stayed, while the pastors fled, branding as intruders and wolves those who replaced them. In doing so they only condemned themselves, in the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, who says that the hireling sees the wolf coming and flees.

When more serene days dawned on our horizon, the fugitives returned—some peaceable and respectable, others bringing back their old claims and their thirst for revenge. Some bishops of the same stamp drove respectable pastors from their posts—men who had won the affection of their parishes. Do not ask how the persecutors then dare to preach on charity; they find it easier to multiply outward practices that never touch the heart than to give solid instruction. The pomp of worship—good in itself, but insufficient—takes the place, in their eyes, of real virtue. And what do virtues matter, so long as the chapels are richly decorated and the processions splendid?

What abundant material there would be for anyone wishing to compose new *Sarcellades* applicable to various regions of France! Parish priests of eminent merit have been replaced by idiots of the first order, troublemakers whose lives are a tissue of fanatical anecdotes—exactly as during the long quarrels over the bull, which in several dioceses dragged on right up to the time of the Revolution. Bishop Beaumont refused the virtuous founder of the institution for the deaf and dumb, the Abbé de l'Épée, permission to hear the confessions of his pupils, even though he alone was capable of performing that function. And to come down to our own century: a man of influence, having asked for information about the clergy of Genoa, complained that the Jansenist sect had been overlooked there. He received this official reply: the Jansenists do not constitute a sect; those who go by that name are the best of the clergy in learning, morals, and attachment to France.

Comparing the two periods, the only differences one finds are these. Then, persecution was carried out with the order or the consent of the government; now, it is carried out without the government's knowledge, and in defiance of its wishes. Then, persecution fell on whoever refused to swear to the bull; now, it falls on those who took the oath required by the Constituent Assembly. Then, at least, baptism was not repeated for those who had received it from a priest under interdict; in our own day this error, condemned for fifteen centuries, has been revived, and the sanctuary has been reopened to priests who had renounced celibacy—and when, despite this expedient (itself contrary to the rules of the Church), there are not enough priests to fill so many vacant posts, men would rather, while complaining of a shortage of clergy, leave a host of parishes abandoned to ignorance and vice than install enlightened and zealous pastors guilty of the unpardonable crime of having obeyed God, their conscience, and their country.

Moreover, just as in the days of the bull, people are turned away from the holy table at will, and certificates of confession are demanded exactly as before. One still recalls the uproar these confession certificates once caused—which the Abbé Mey jokingly proposed should be subject to a stamp duty—and the refusals of the sacraments on points the bull itself says nothing about; Benedict XIV ordered them granted except in cases that almost never arise. In the time of the League, the sacraments were refused at Reims and elsewhere to those who would not sign it. A hundred years later, the same treatment was given to those who would not swear to the formulary; and a hundred years after that, the same refusal to those who had

taken the oath of 1791. Yet although the same causes ought to have produced the same outcome, there was nothing uniform about it.

There exists in France more than one seminary where students are taught the proper procedure for letting a person suspected of Jansenism die without the sacraments: the methods are to delay, to claim the danger is not yet imminent, to make excuses—in a word, to lie. This spirit of petty persecution is the inheritance bequeathed by earlier fanatics to those of our own day. In one place, laypeople—and especially priests—were denied the sacraments even at the hour of death; elsewhere they were granted only to the dying.[49] At Orléans, nuns were deprived of them for twenty-two years, after which they were restored, although the nuns had not changed their principles in the slightest. At Orléans again, and at Loudun, they were refused to the Calvairiennes, while they were granted to those of Poitiers, Tours, and Vendôme—who had nonetheless shown their opposition to the bull.[50]

The same contradiction occurred over ecclesiastical burial, granted to some and refused to others. This indignity was reserved even for the author of so many fine hymns in the Paris Breviary, Coffin, who died in 1749. The parish priest refused him a funeral; he was forced to perform this duty, and it was remarked that he looked exactly like Haman leading Mordecai in triumph.

49 See Lepage, p. 200 and following.
50 Idem, passim.

Chapter VI The House of Les Granges, Inhabited by the Solitaries of Port-Royal

An English geographer, Pinkerton, who in 1806 published his *Recollections of Paris*, after a grandiloquent tribute to the writers of Port-Royal, finds it strange that they should have lodged in the same house as the nuns.[51] The answer is simple: they did not. The monastery, situated at the bottom of the valley, had—as did every community of women—an adjacent but separate building for the confessor. This very modest building stood on the site of the one once inhabited by St. Thibaut, a hermit who had sanctified himself in this wilderness before the abbey's founding.

Among the priests who served as confessors at Port-Royal, several—such as Singlin and Saintemarthe—published works full of unction and are well known as spiritual writers. By what oversight have historians omitted Charles La Grange? Even Clémencet says scarcely a word about him.[52] La Grange later became prior-priest of Villiers-le-Bel, where he died in 1709; at the end of the prayer services founded in that parish, a *De Profundis* is still recited for him to this day. He is the author of two anonymous works: one a refutation of a piece defending the theater,[53] the other a three-volume collection of solid spiritual instructions entitled *Les mystères sacrés de N. S. J. C.*[54]

To the north, on the hillside overlooking the valley of Port-Royal, the solitaries lived in the house called Les Granges. It was there, around 1637, that—seeking solitude and peace—a community of scholars settled, men equally distinguished in religion and in letters:

Pascal, Arnauld, Nicole, Hamon, d'Andilly, Sacy, Dufossé, Floriot, Pontis, Fontaine, Lancelot, Tillemont, Pontchâteau, Treuvé, and others.

The solitaries' house, still standing complete with its outbuildings, has undergone only the changes needed to turn it into a working farm. Until four years ago one could still see there the remains of a machine invented by Pascal, by which a twelve-year-old child could easily draw from a well 54 meters (27 toises) deep a volume of water weighing at least 13

51 See *Recollections of Paris*, 2 vols., 8vo, London, 1806, vol. I, p. 450.
52 Vol. II, pp. 9ff. and 42ff.
53 12mo, Paris, 1694.
54 3 vols., 8vo, Paris, 1697.

myriagrams (about 270 pounds), not counting the weight of the bucket itself. This machine, which I had noted on my earlier visits, no longer exists, and the well has been filled in.

Visitors take an interest in Hamon's room, where he slept on a plank bed—a room that could only have been inhabited by a man thoroughly resolved to renounce every comfort of life. Arnauld's room is pleasantly situated, with a view over the whole valley; no doubt it was once well stocked with the works of the Church Fathers. Today the walls are decorated with engravings from Cervantes's novel.

In the orchard and kitchen garden many espaliers and tall windbreak trees still stand, contemporaries of the solitaries, planted by their own hands; seeing them stirs a moving emotion—a feeling that will draw no condescending smile from anyone able to appreciate the charm of memory and of place. Although these trees, now decrepit, bear almost nothing anymore, the tenant farmer forbids their removal.

To these names, which command respect, let us add those of their most distinguished friends, both French and foreign:

[Here follows a long alphabetical list of roughly 250 names of clergy, scholars, bishops, and other figures associated with the Port-Royal circle — d'Acheri, d'Aguesseau, Cardinal d'Aguirre, Noël Alexandre, Bossuet, Boileau-Despréaux, Mabillon, Cardinal de Bérulle, Madame de Sévigné and her son, the Prince de Conti, Racine and his sons, Van Espen, and many others.]

Worthy debtors to history, these writers — most of them French — are now better known outside France than in their own country, for several reasons. First, had they written witty or salacious novels, their names would be known to everyone; but they wrote books of morality, in a country where the amusing has always been preferred to the useful. Second, ecclesiastical learning, which still thrives in other lands, had long languished here since the decline of serious study, and is now almost extinguished; and since by its nature it is bound up with every branch of human knowledge, especially erudition, one already notices that several modern works betray their authors' ignorance on this subject. Third, many people draw their superficial knowledge solely from historical dictionaries; whatever is not in those imperfect compilations simply does not exist for them. Fourth, the works produced by this school are extremely numerous — those concerning religion alone would form a substantial library. The

Port-Royalist writers, avoiding the limelight and more concerned with doing good than with making noise, cared little about being listed among the learned. Moreover, for a century and a half, ceaselessly harassed and struck down by *lettres de cachet*, they were often forced to hide their names and whereabouts. Saint-Cyran had been imprisoned at Vincennes, Fontaine at the Bastille — along with the modest Sacy, who throughout his life, and especially during his captivity, had set himself this rule of conduct: to depend on God, to humble himself, and to suffer. Arnauld was reduced to exile. On this occasion a courtier said to Louis XIV: "By your order, Arnauld is being sought so that he may be imprisoned; you have always been fortunate — he will not be found." These are the reasons why so many excellent books from the Port-Royal school were printed anonymously or pseudonymously, without place of publication and sometimes without date — attributable partly to the modesty of the authors, partly to the persecution they faced. Bibliographers are often hard pressed to assign authorship.

The adherents of Port-Royal always formed a scattered family, whose invisible bonds were strengthened by the persecution directed against them. From this arose that correspondence printed under the title *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques*, begun in 1728. I do not claim to approve or defend everything contained in these sheets, sometimes written with real acrimony. I do not know to which of its editors d'Alembert meant to apply the insulting epithets that some have delighted in repeating; but certainly the last two editors, Saint-Marc and Mouton, would have won even d'Alembert's esteem, had he known them. Saint-Marc edited it from 1760 to 1794; he died in 1807. Mouton, who continued it at Utrecht, died there in 1803. The work, interrupted since that time, has not been resumed.

This journal, published clandestinely, managed to escape every search. The story is often told of the lieutenant of police, Hérault, who, trying to discover where it was being printed, one day ransacked with his agents every corner of a house on the Rue Saint-Jacques. After fruitless searching, he climbed back into his carriage, which had remained at the door — only to find inside it the latest issue, still damp from the press!

The skill with which the authors of this work eluded the vigilance of the French inquisition may serve as a model — an example well worth citing at a moment when several European governments, conspiring against the freedom of the press, are striving to rivet more tightly the chains of their peoples — that is, of dethroned sovereigns.

Printing is a powerful weapon that heaven has given them against the assaults of despotism. In the struggle between despotism and principle, its fall will be all the more certain and near if stereotype printing is perfected, and especially if what constitutes a portable press, with all its parts, can be reduced to very simple elements, so that it costs little and takes up little space.[55]

Some men of letters worthy of the name will perhaps reproach the author of this work for the many omissions in a list which could indeed have been enriched with a host of other respectable names — such as Cardinal Noris, Contenson, Concina, Berti, Bellelli; for it is well established that all of these, in declaring themselves against what was called Jansenism, believed it consisted in approving the five condemned propositions, which no one in fact upholds. Proof of this can be found especially in the case of Berti and Bellelli, Augustinian friars. With the approval of Benedict XIV, they published a work setting out the doctrine of the bull's opponents; but, imagining that these opponents must be heretics, they in good faith — relying on hearsay — attributed to them gross errors. These imputations were rejected as slanderous by two French bishops who were great enemies of Port-Royal, Saleon and the notorious Languet; yet, convinced all the same that Berti and Bellelli were upholding the opponents' doctrine, they complained to Benedict XIV that, as the two Augustinians presented their system, it would follow that Jansenism was a chimera. What did the pope do? He gave even more conspicuous protection to the two friars' work, and allowed Berti — the only one still living — to defend himself, which he did by admitting he had been mistaken about the errors imputed to those called Jansenists, while continuing to uphold their doctrine.[56]

Ties of family and society do not always produce identical opinions; Jesuits themselves have been seen opposing probabilism, and the Society's last general, Ricci, had as his nephew a prelate, still living, who has become famous throughout the Catholic world for the salutary reforms he sought to introduce. Bruzen de la Martinière, included in the list, was the nephew of the notorious Simon who, though an Oratorian, showed himself an enemy of Port-Royal. Ségur, Bishop of Saint-Papoul, had signed the formulary, but retracted his signature in a pastoral letter and resigned his see. Malebranche, who had signed it, asked that his retraction be deposited in the archives of Port-Royal, despite his disagreements with Arnauld. Racine,

55 Footnote on a 1801 pamphlet attacking this very passage as it appeared in the first edition of *Les Ruines*; the author notes the pamphleteer attacked him at the very moment he was being elevated to public office, and declines to name him beyond an initial.

56 See Le Paige, p. 200ff.

who had attacked Port-Royal because he felt personally targeted by Nicole's censure of the theater, was answered by his fellow academician Philippe Goibaud du Bois, translator of Cicero and St. Augustine. Racine, having returned from his error, asked in his will to be buried at Port-Royal, at Hamon's feet. Alluding to the time when he had written against the solitaries, a wit (quoted in Condillac) remarked: in his lifetime, he would never have agreed to be buried there.

Excluded from the list are men whom weakness, ignorance, or corruption made fickle — as every country produces such men: Bourzeis, Steyaert, Santeul (a good poet, but unstable in his ideas — the charming piece *Santolius Pœnitens* is not his but Fraguier's). Petit-Didier had written an apology for the *Provinciales*, but later wrote a treatise in favor of papal infallibility, for which the pope rewarded him with the titular bishopric of Macra *in partibus*. On this occasion the pun circulated: "Your work was *macrum* [thin]; your reward shall be Macra."

Baluze long followed the path of sound canon lawyers; but needing Rome's favor for a pension of a thousand francs charged on the bishopric of Auxerre, he abandoned his plan to publish the very extensive acts of the Council of Basel, for which he had begun a new collection of councils, of which only the first volume appeared. A priest named Martin had refused a pension of two thousand francs on that same bishopric, saying he had rendered it no service. Such Jansenists are intractable — Martin was; Baluze was not.

As for the virtuous but weak Cardinal de Noailles, one recalls a work that appeared under the title of a riddle: "Whom to believe — Noailles, Bishop of Châlons, approving the *Réflexions morales* in 1695, or Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, censuring them in 1696?" The author of this riddle was the Abbé Boileau — the same who, speaking of the cardinal's hat, told him he would be greater wearing it under his feet than on his head. When, near the end of his life, a pastoral letter accepting the bull was wrung from him, one might apply to him what Villefore said of another prelate: that he regarded the bull as a poison one could swallow provided one tempered it with an antidote capable of neutralizing its virulence.

Descending from the cedar to the hyssop, let us note that in our own day the same scenes have been repeated in other forms. The lure of high office, or some other motive, has transformed the principles of a petty self-seeker who swore to his parish — unasked — never to waver. It is regrettable that, on the score of inconsistency, he must be placed alongside a man who far

surpasses him in talent. How can the worthy colleague of Valla at the theological faculty of Lyon now praise the poor theology of Collet and of the diocese of Poitiers? He once praised the excellent work *Les Prières chrétiennes*, in two volumes — how can he now, in a public writing, recommend very mediocre works, when France abounds in admirable books fit to nourish piety?

If, after the celebrated men already listed, we do not add the long catalogue of living writers who are heirs to their piety, their talents, and their courage — some French, some foreign — it is for fear of offending the modesty of all, and of compromising the freedom, even the very existence, of several of the latter. Let us not forget that there were recently countries where despotism, conflating the meanings of "Jansenist" and "Jacobin," used this talisman to have imprisoned, even massacred, those whom hatred branded with both labels. In the Kingdom of Naples, the Bishop of Potenza, Serrao, was murdered in his bed; he died after blessing and forgiving his assassin. When the old court of Naples was venting its fury, the canon lawyer Conforti was imprisoned — but his profound learning could still be useful for drafting a memorandum the court needed; he drew it up at their invitation and on the promises made to him; once they had what they wanted, he was hanged.

Port-Royal has admirers in every Protestant country, and admirers and adherents in every Catholic country — but nowhere more than in Italy, especially among the bishops and in the universities.

As for living French writers attached to this school, most of those residing in Paris formed, in 1795, the Société de Philosophie Chrétienne, which held weekly meetings — a learned and unassuming gathering from which, without anyone suspecting it, several good works emerged. Among its members were Pingré, Camus, Pasumot, and others.

Before closing this chapter, let us return to a few of the men named in the list of Port-Royal's friends.

St. François de Sales called this monastery his "dear delight."

The Abbé de Saint-Cyran, imprisoned at Vincennes, found himself there alongside the famous mercenary commander Jean de Werth. In 1641 a ballet was performed at the Cardinal's

palace, to which Jean de Werth had been invited. Asked what he found most remarkable about the spectacle, he replied: "That bishops are at the theater while saints are in prison."[57]

Balzac, disillusioned with a world in which he had seen little but the doing of evil and the counterfeiting of good, wrote to Saint-Cyran: "It is impossible both to esteem oneself and to know you."[58] To this letter, elaborately composed in the author's usual manner, Saint-Cyran replied at once, in a few lines, with an answer Balzac never tired of admiring. The *Gazette de France*, in its Paris column of October 17, 1643, announced Saint-Cyran's death:

> *On the eleventh of this month, the Abbé de Saint-Cyran, who had been ill for some days, died here of an apoplexy that came upon him immediately after he had received the holy viaticum, with a piety worthy of his eminent virtue — such that the prelates then in this city, wishing to give public testimony of the esteem in which they held so great a man, recognized by all as one of the most learned in the Church, the Bishop of Amiens performed the funeral office at the church of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, attended by the Archbishop of Bordeaux, the Bishops of Valence, of Chalcedon, and of Aire, the coadjutor of Montauban, several persons of high rank, and a great number of others of every condition.*

Saint-Cyran was buried at Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas, in the sanctuary on the epistle side, under an epitaph that still survives: *Non erit tibi Deus recens, non erit tibi veritas recens.*

In the solitude of Les Granges, this informal academy took shape — men who, alongside the most outstanding talents, combined simplicity of heart, complete disinterestedness, and devotion to the wellbeing of all around them. The hands that wrote so many excellent works did not disdain the spade and the sickle. Hamon — who had once been seen in Paris, in gaiters and a coarse linen coat, presiding over a Greek thesis on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates — would wander the countryside bringing remedies to the poor sick. It was said that of a physician he had only the learning and the charity.

After conversing with the scholars of Athens, he would go to tend his espaliers — this same d'Andilly of whom Balzac said: "He possesses both the moral virtues and the Christian virtues, in such a way that he takes no vanity from the one nor feels any shame at the other."

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57 Clémencet, vol. II, pp. 127–128.
58 *Lettres diverses de M. Balzac*, 12mo, Paris, 1664, vol. I, p. 220ff.

Pascal received visits from Descartes in his retreat, and, to distract himself from a toothache, worked out the properties of the cycloid. Almost always ill, his resignation and patience never failed; he gave thanks to heaven that, being necessarily in a state of suffering, there was nothing left for him to do but submit humbly.

Pascal, living incognito in Paris under the name "M. du Mons" and lodged on the Rue des Poiriers, at the Auberge du Roi David, opposite the Jesuit house, composed his *Provinciales* there. His brother-in-law Périer, having come to visit him, received a visit from Father Fretat, a Jesuit and relative of his, who told him: "In our Society we are convinced these letters are by Pascal; advise him to stop, for they could bring him trouble." At that very moment, some twenty copies of the seventh and eighth letters lay drying on Périer's bed; he hurried to remove them before showing his brother-in-law, lodged in the next room, the way out.[59]

The following thought has often occurred to me: why, in this work in which Pascal exposed the corrupt doctrine of so many Jesuit writers, did he never mention one of the most notorious, Pallavicino, whose errors would have furnished ample material for his criticism?

There are anecdotes which, once spread among the public, come to be taken as truths simply because they are amusing and feed malice — such as the claims that Nicole constantly saw a tile suspended over his head, ready to fall on him, or that Pascal shuddered at the idea of an abyss beside him. Everyone knows these stories and repeats them without examination. No contemporary testimony has handed them down to us. Madame Périer says not a word of them in her life of her brother. The supposed abyss is mentioned only in a letter of the Abbé Boileau, published by Madame de Crèvecœur long after the death of the man it concerns. Voltaire eagerly seized on this tale, hoping thereby to diminish the impression of Pascal's religious genius. Bossut, in his *Life of Pascal*, confines the vision of the abyss to a few moments of sleeplessness, citing no authority.

Let us hear what Bayle thought of Pascal's piety: "A hundred volumes of sermons are not worth this single life, and are far less capable of disarming the impious; the humility and extraordinary devotion of M. Pascal mortify libertines more than a dozen missionaries let loose upon them would. They can no longer tell us that piety belongs only to small minds, for

59 Clémencet, vol. III, p. 577.

here it is shown at its highest pitch in one of the greatest geometers, one of the most subtle metaphysicians, and one of the most penetrating minds the world has ever seen."[60]

Pascal was buried at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, behind the high altar, at the corner of the pillar of the Lady Chapel.

When the news of Arnauld's death reached Rome, Cardinal Casanate declared, in full consistory, that saints had been canonized who had rendered the Church fewer services and lived no more blamelessly than this doctor. Cardinal d'Aguirre did not hesitate to rank, alongside the holy priests of antiquity, a man who, he said, did as much honor to Paris, his native city, and to France, as St. Clement of Alexandria and Origen did to Egypt, St. Jerome to Dalmatia, St. Mamertus to Vienne, St. Felix to Nola, and St. John "the Elder" to Ephesus.

Bayle, and Morenas after him, claim it is unknown where Doctor Arnauld died and was buried.[61] How could they not know that he died in Brussels, where he is buried in the choir of the parish church of Sainte-Catherine? Grosley, of the Académie des Belles-Lettres, bequeathed in his will six hundred francs toward the cost of a monument to be erected to Arnauld, whether in Paris or in Brussels. It is said that this sum is still held by his family, with the intention of carrying out the testator's wishes — but why so long a delay? If the monument is ever built, it could bear the epitaph Boileau composed for Arnauld.

Thomas relates[62] that when intrigue caused Arnauld and Pascal to be excluded from Charles Perrault's Éloges des Hommes Illustres, people applied to them the famous passage of Tacitus: their images shone all the brighter precisely because they were not displayed. The publisher was eventually obliged to restore their entries to the work.

Cardinal Tomasi-Ferrari, a Dominican recently canonized, was the one who had tried to dissuade Clement XI from issuing the bull Unigenitus. This fact is recorded in a letter dated March 2, 1756, from Bottari, librarian of the Vatican; a large part of his unpublished correspondence exists in Paris in the original.

Cardinal Marefoschi wished that a still-living German archbishop should lead a confederation then forming among the bishops of that country in favor of the Church of Holland, to which the late Cardinal-Archbishop of Udine had been closely bound.

60 Clémencet, vol. IV, p. 263.
61 See Bayle's *Dictionnaire*, article "Arnauld."
62 See his *Essai sur les Éloges*.

The Queen of Poland, Louise-Marie de Gonzague, was the one who, by dispensation, married her brother-in-law Casimir, who later died in France. She never forgot Mother Angélique's words to her: "All the grandeur of a throne is but a shadow, a nothing, before God."

One can form a picture of the maxims taught at Port-Royal regarding conduct — whether in society or in the management of a household — by reading Duguet's *Conduite d'une dame chrétienne*, and the work by Madame de Liancourt modestly entitled *Réglemens donnés à sa petite-fille, pour sa conduite et celle de sa maison*. In these writings one finds a solid piety, free of both arrogance and pettiness. "The only rule for what we owe the world," she writes, "is what we owe God." On how to treat servants, she tells her granddaughter: "Since all are born of Adam, their ancestors were as great as yours" — a maxim very simple, very true, yet forgotten by so many. This same Madame de Liancourt was known to lend money to those who were suing her, when without such help they could not have pursued their rights.

This recalls an anecdote about M. de Sévigné: his own infirmities having obliged him to keep two servants near him, he in turn nursed them when they fell ill.[63]

Several works by authors named in this list remain in manuscript. For instance, at Utrecht, two volumes of letters from Quesnel to a young woman who, having become a clopje, had brought all her sisters to the same way of life. In Holland, clopjes are women who, without binding themselves by vows, live in celibacy and devote themselves to works of charity such as the education of children and the care of churches; a breviary in the Dutch language has been printed for their use.

Dom Clémencet composed, though it was never printed, a literary history of Port-Royal in five quarto volumes, of which two copies exist in Paris — a work of great interest both for religion and for bibliography. One might wish that at least an abridgment, with the necessary additions since the author's death, could be published.

Anquetil du Perron intended to bring out a new edition of Le Gros's *Traité de l'Église*, with notes of his own equal in extent to the work itself — together forming four quarto volumes. The names of these two scholars alone would be enough to recommend it.

Let us close this chapter with a very simple observation. The very incomplete alphabetical list of Port-Royalist writers represents, in a sense, a holy confederation of men who thought in a

63 *Necrologe*, p. 141.

uniform way on the matters in dispute. Either all of them were heretics, or none were. In the first case, they must all be regarded as outside the Church — yes, all, including several who have since been canonized; in the second case, what are we to think of the persecutions and the persecutors who, down to the present day, perpetuate strife within the Church and torment consciences?

Chapter VII Services Rendered by the Port-Royalists to Morals, Religion, Education, the Sciences, and Public Liberty

Example is the first of preachers. The example of Port-Royal offered to contemporaries and to posterity the purity of virtue, the sublimity of genius, the depth of erudition. In the conduct and the works of the Port-Royalists is found everything good, great, and generous: love of truth, of Jesus Christ, of His Church; charity embracing all men, in every place, under every form, in every circumstance. Never were they seen dragging through the corridors of the sanctuary that ambition for honors and positions which, in their day as in ours, patronage and nepotism so often took from merit and gave instead to baseness and intrigue. There are people who take from truth only the honor it can bring them, and abandon it the moment it falls into disgrace.[641] Humbled or exalted, whatever appeared to the Port-Royalists as truth always held the same value in their eyes. To it they sacrificed position, fortune, freedom, and every worldly consideration. In their conduct one finds again the courage of the Maccabees and of their mother.

Not everyone is given the gift of presenting evangelical morality with the dignity, austerity, and gentleness that properly belong to it; but it appears so in that great body of works published by Port-Royal, which have been compared to the granaries of Joseph for times of famine. Constantly they turn man back upon himself, forcing him to look within, to convince him that true piety consists not in mental reflections but in the sentiments of a heart justified by works. When they speak to ministers of the altar about the duty of acquiring that knowledge which, in the prophet's words, ought to rest upon their lips, it is to express the fear that they might make greater progress in learning than in piety.[1] When they speak to Christians in general, they hold up before their eyes the wanderings of worldly people who, outwardly religious and serving God as they themselves wish rather than as God wishes, take pride in faithfully observing the external practices of Christianity while, full of the leaven of Adam and of the desires of concupiscence, infected with pride, with self-love, with their supposed good qualities and their comforts, they impose on the body austerities that touch only its surface, while permitting themselves without scruple useless curiosities, biting mockeries, affected contempt, and antipathies as opposed to charity as to humility — those

64 Duguet, *Dispositions pour les saints mystères*.

two virtues which are the soul of the Christian life. They permit themselves ruinous distractions, ridiculous quirks, a moody way of life that loves to occupy a place in the world's opinion and to enjoy certain preferences. This refined self-love, merely changing its object, feeds on the very things it claims to have given up; in place of the homage it once enjoyed in worldly circles, it feasts on the homage offered to it by the hand of piety — and, without noticing the trap, it happens that the incense blessed in the censer intoxicates just as strongly as the incense burned in the salons of the world.[65]

Ceaselessly the Port-Royalists thunder against that false devotion which, compared to the true, has been likened to the froth on a glass of Tokay wine; against those false devotees so common in every age — meddling, spiteful, gossiping, seeing nothing but evil in anything outside the narrow circle of their own ideas, tormenting their neighbor under pretext of love of God, and so proud of their humility. Colard, in his too-little-read *Lettres*, justly exclaims: "How many devout women who pass themselves off as defenders of the truth have, as their sole merit, nothing but a friendship struck up by chance with one of its champions!"[661] He might have added that others imagine themselves sharing in the glory of Port-Royal merely by affecting to hate and disparage the Jesuits. Now, as in the time of the Messiah, society is made up largely of Sadducees and Pharisees: the former reject religion, its duties, and the Church's commandments because these run counter to their disordered passions; the latter reconcile their vices with petty, supererogatory practices that leave intact the whole corruption of a heart they refuse to examine. By stamping piety with ridicule, they inspire in a great many people an aversion to the duties of Christianity — people who fear being lumped together with those whose conceptions are so petty and deranged. Between these two classes of men, it is not easy to say which does religion the greater harm.

One of the duties most strongly impressed in the writings of Port-Royal is the obligation to grieve over the Church's misfortunes and to rejoice in her blessings,[67] and to work, each within the sphere where Providence has placed him, to increase the latter and lessen the former. Thus, following one conference, the abbess Angélique Arnauld proposed to her community that they pray especially for the persecuted Church of England. This duty is almost entirely

65 Duguet, *Explication du mystère de la Passion*, p. 162.
See *Le Verbe incarné*, Paris, 8vo, 1754, part I, pp. 54, 55–58; and *Élévation sur la vie et les mystères de Jésus-Christ*, by Plowden, published by Sicard, 2 vols., 8vo, Paris, 1806, vol. II, p. 183.
66 See his *Lettres*, vol. I, p. 240.
67 See Duguet's letter to Van Espen; Gourlin's *Catéchisme de Naples*; *Annales de la religion*, vol. 18, p. 551ff.

forgotten today, when believers — even pastors, otherwise zealous — confine themselves to their families, their parishes, their dioceses, sometimes to a small circle of devout women, forgetting that such indifference is itself a fault, and cloak their timidity under the pretext of prudence.

It is well known with what courage Port-Royal defended sound morality against the hideous claims of the casuists — above all that Escobar, whose very name became a byword and supplied expressions to our language, and whose book, printed thirty-nine times as a textbook, was printed a fortieth time simply to satisfy the curiosity of those who wished to verify the citations alleged in the *Provinciales*.

Pascal had covered with shame and ridicule those men who claimed to widen the road to heaven by widening the road to vice — by sanctioning equivocation and mental reservation among merchants, debtors, and bankrupts.

He defended the love of God against the ingratitude that dares to question when and to what extent one must love God in order to be reconciled with Him. The true measure of that love, says a Church Father, is to love without measure. Yet for a century and a half, doctors of falsehood have branded as error, and struck with anathema, the very obligation to love Him as the condition of reconciliation; and as Plowden puts it: "Monsters have claimed that the dispensation from loving God is the very benefit Jesus Christ brought into this world."[68] Some theologians have seriously busied themselves proving that one is not obliged to love the Eternal, the giver of every good. Forty years after the publication of Pascal's work, Father Daniel tried in vain to refute it in his *Entretiens de Cléanthe et d'Eudoxe*, which no one reads anymore. Immediately afterward Dom Petit-Didier entered the lists, the same author of the *Apologie des Lettres Provinciales*, a work too little read — and this new champion remained master of the field. Despréaux poured contempt on the impertinences of the scholastics in his *Épître sur l'amour de Dieu*, and Racine inserted into his *Athalie* a sublime canticle on the same subject.[69]

From Port-Royal came the thunderbolts that crushed probabilism — that modern invention by which a host of crimes could supposedly be justified, so long as their enormity had been called into doubt by some "grave doctor." And to whose name, after all, could that epithet not

68 Plowden, *Élévation sur la vie...*, vol. II, p. 40.
69 *Athalie*, act I, scene IV.

be attached? Show me, moreover, a single moral truth that unreason has not rendered debatable, that the passions have not shrouded in confusion. Did we not see, in 1743, a certain Father Benzi put forward lewd maxims which, upheld by other Italian Jesuits, earned them the nickname "mammillary" theologians?[70]

How many excellent books, now ignored or scorned because their titles announce ascetic or polemical works, are in fact arsenals of learned research in which the nature of Church law and the rights of the hierarchy and of the priesthood are set forth in the most brilliant fashion! Need I cite the pastoral letters of the prelates of Paris, Montpellier, Senez, Auxerre — Noailles, Colbert, Soanen, Caylus — the *Exaples*; *La Vérité rendue sensible* by du Saussoy; *La Vérité persécutée par l'erreur*, attributed to Dom Toussaint, a Benedictine; the *Catéchisme dogmatique* by Fourquevaux; the *Lois ecclésiastiques tirées des seuls livres saints* by Fromageot, a Dijon lawyer; and so on?

Voltaire singles out as a masterpiece Nicole's treatise on the means of preserving peace in society. Alongside it one might place Duguet's treatises on public prayer, on the dispositions for offering the holy mysteries, and on the marks of charity — works in which he probed the human heart with such art. Many men of letters are not even aware that these writings exist, worthy as they are to stand beside La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère. How greatly to be wished that all Christians, and especially clergy, would steep themselves in the principles drawn from them! These writers everywhere instill a spirit of humility, charity, detachment from worldly things, and self-denial — a spirit that the detractors of Christianity would like to confuse with sterile contemplation, with the abandonment of work, and with withdrawal from one's fellow men, as though social relations were not part of our duties.

Writers who paraded their unbelief have tried by every means to destroy the monuments of religion. Thus Antoine La Salle, in his translation of Bacon, suppressed everything attesting to the English philosopher's humble belief in revelation; he found his avengers in Deluc and in the worthy author who published *Le Christianisme de Bacon*.[71] Condorcet, in his translation of Euler's letters and in an edition of Pascal, attempted, as Voltaire had done, to erase or at least weaken the tributes paid to Christianity by men of genius.

70 See this article in *Histoire des sectes modernes*, vol. II.
71 Paris, 1799, 2 vols., 12mo.

In a different but no less reprehensible way, certain reckless individuals have tampered with the works of writers who are an honor to France, substituting for the principles religion upholds the prejudices it disavows — the poisoned fruit of modern ignorance. Thus in 1780, at Brussels, with the approval of that highly inconsistent prelate Frankenberg, Cardinal-Archbishop of Mechelen, Fleury's *Catéchisme historique* was falsified. Among other things, Fleury is blamed there for having approved the translation of the divine offices and of Holy Scripture into the vernacular.[72] The forger, it is said, was Pacquot, formerly professor of Hebrew at Louvain, author of memoirs toward a literary history of the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries — memoirs steeped in ultramontanism, in which one searches in vain for the names of Huyghens, Van Viane, and Van Espen.

Port-Royal was always at once a friend of the Holy See, whose rights it defended, and an opponent of the Roman curia, whose abuses it censured — though certain people find it convenient to conflate the Holy See with the Roman curia. The curia, in its constant struggle against the liberties of the Gallican Church, opposed to them claims as contrary to political independence as to the rules of the ancient discipline. At Port-Royal it was maintained that the Molinists made God less powerful than He is, and the pope more powerful than he ought to be. It is regrettable, no doubt, that disputes over various theological points gave rise to so many books which, on both sides, were not always written at the dictation of charity; but at least the result was an examination of the foundations on which the Roman curia based its claims. Guidance was sought in the principles proclaimed by St. Irenaeus, St. Firmilian, St. Cyprian, Vincent of Lérins, and others; by the Councils of Constance and Basel; by Cardinals Zabarella and Nicholas of Cusa, the Blessed Aleman, Pierre d'Ailly; by Clémangis, Major, Almain, and above all the celebrated Gerson. Important points were clarified, and a clear line was drawn between the legitimate rights of the head of the Church and the exaggerations dictated by ambition.

D'Aguesseau observes that the defenders of our liberties, far from being rewarded, were often punished for the very services they had rendered to Church and State — a remark amply confirmed by the persecutions endured by the scholars of Port-Royal.

From a political point of view, they may be cited as forerunners of the Revolution — not in those excesses which made every honest soul groan, but in those principles of patriotism

72 See *Catéchisme historique*, 8vo, Brussels, 1778.

which burst forth with such energy in 1789. Hence their adversaries painted as seditious men who hated despotism all the more because they were the strictest observers of the law.

D'Avrigny claims, following Leydecker, that Jansenius was accused of having drafted memoranda urging the Flemish to form themselves into a republic, after the manner of the Dutch and the Swiss. The *Mars Gallicus*, of which the Bishop of Ypres is unquestionably the author, seems to contradict d'Avrigny's claim; but even if it were true, the only consequence would be that Jansenius's name should be added to the list of celebrated publicists and great statesmen who have brought honor to Holland. In any case, Leydecker was answered by Quesnel in his anonymous work *La Souveraineté des rois défendue contre Leydecker*, in which Quesnel demonstrates beyond doubt that the Dutch Protestants had ruthlessly persecuted Catholics. The work itself, however, is mediocre, and in it — as in his moral reflections on chapter XIII of the Epistle to the Romans — Quesnel shows himself a partisan of passive obedience.

After Jansenius, in this same connection, must be mentioned a man perhaps overpraised by some, but certainly far too harshly condemned by others — Duvergier de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint-Cyran. One of the historians of Port-Royal, Besogne, claims that this author's work entitled *Question royale* is so rare that no one anywhere possesses it, and that neither Bayle nor Dupin was ever able to find it.[73] In fact five copies of the original edition are known, one in the Bibliothèque rue de Richelieu and two in that of the Quatre-Nations. It was reprinted in 1778, because in it the author examines — in what is almost a purely metaphysical case — whether a man might lawfully take his own life to save that of the head of a state. Voltaire was pleased to slander Saint-Cyran by claiming he had written a book in favor of suicide; Morenas repeated the charge. Clémencet and others have shown that the *Question royale* was printed without Saint-Cyran's consent, and that he regarded it merely as an intellectual exercise, akin to Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*. It does contain false and objectionable ideas, but not all of them deserve that label. In it one finds the principle of the sovereignty of the people, which alone constitutes the legitimacy of any government whatsoever: "In organizing themselves into a state, individuals transferred their rights to the community, and the part is obliged to sacrifice itself to preserve the whole."

73 Vol. III, p. 550.

Pascal said that, in a state organized as a republic, it was a great evil to help install a king there and to oppress the liberty of peoples to whom God had given it.[74]

Various writers attribute to an adherent of Port-Royal the famous anonymous book that appeared toward the end of the seventeenth century — a copy of which the court bought for 500 francs in Maupeou's time, in order to suppress it entirely — and which was reprinted in 1781 under the title *Les Vœux d'un patriote, ou Soupirs de la France qui aspire après la liberté*. In it, it is plainly stated that the estates of the realm are superior to the king, and the true repository of sovereignty. Arnauld, however, writing to du Vaucel, claims this work is by an outright Huguenot who merely affects not to appear so;[75] and Fontette, in the *Bibliothèque historique de France*, attributes it to Jurieu.[76] It is now known that the *Mémoires de la Régence* are by Piossens, and that the *Mémoires historiques et critiques sur divers points de l'Histoire de France* were written by Eudes de Mézeray. When the author of the *Dictionnaire des livres jansénistes* attributes these to the Port-Royal circle, it is plainly not meant as a compliment, but out of malice.

This sovereignty, this *jus imperii*, belongs to the body of citizens of a popular state, says Doctor Arnauld, in his curious work entitled *Le Véritable Portrait de Guillaume-Henri de Nassau, nouvel Absalon, nouvel Hérode, nouveau Cromwell, nouveau Néron*. The same author, in his memoirs on the dispute concerning the sovereignty of Neuchâtel, demonstrates that it can be judged only by the estates, who alone have the right, in the first instance, to determine their own competence.[77] "This right flows from the very nature of sovereignty, which, being subject to nothing but itself, can acknowledge no master save itself and the laws it has made for itself."[78] Arnauld backs his principles with historical examples, citing the Estates of France that decided between Philippe de Valois and the King of England. He adds that no foreign state has the right to meddle in such a dispute, and that any sovereign prince may establish the indivisibility of his territories only with the consent of the people.[79]

Despite this very explicit testimony, doubts about Arnauld's true opinions were raised by an anonymous author who in 1789 published three volumes entitled *Origine et étendue de la*

74 See Arnauld's *Lettres*, vol. V, 1689, p. 596.
75 Vol. II, p. 779, no. 27300.
76 Ibid., vol. IV, p. 461.
77 See Arnauld's *Œuvres*, 4to, Lausanne, 1780, vol. XXXVII, p. 241.
78 Ibid., pp. 215–216.
79 Ibid., pp. 264, 307.

puissance royale, suivant les livres saints et les canons — known to be the work of the learned Maultrot. If this writer, and Herluison, who published a similar work on the same principles, did not always apply those principles to their own conduct in matters concerning the clergy, the result is merely a practical inconsistency, for which their own writings furnish ample grounds of refutation. Maultrot and Blonde enriched with their notes the new edition of the *Maximes du droit public français*, an estimable work by the Abbé Mey.

Doctor Boileau, who in 1708 published *Recherches historiques sur l'approbation des livres théologiques*, formally established in it the supremacy of the estates.[80]

Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, and Caulet, Bishop of Pamiers, were persecuted under pretext of the *régale*, but in reality, says one writer, for having upheld the interests of the people in the Assembly of Estates, from which they were excluded by royal order.[81]

The following passage from Legros, canon of Reims, in his work *Renversement des libertés de l'église gallicane dans l'affaire de la constitution*, deserves attention:

> *The power of life and death belongs, as to its proper ownership, to the body of the republic — though it must be exercised by one or several superiors who act, command, judge, and punish in its name. ... This authority is more essentially attached to society than to the head who governs it. ... Those who exercise it die and are replaced by others, but the body itself does not die; even the form of government may change, yet the substance of authority appears unchanged, and the republic loses nothing of it. The Roman nation, for example, always retained the ownership of power, whether under kings, consuls, or emperors*[82]

This passage, wrongly censured by Charancy, Bishop of Montpellier, was vigorously defended by Gaultier de Louviers in his work known as *Les Verges d'Héliodore*.

The rights and duties of individuals, considered as members of political society, are forgotten or far too little developed in elementary religious instruction — a gap that needs filling. The *Catéchisme sur l'église pour les temps de trouble*, written by a friend of Port-Royal at the beginning of the last century, is perhaps the only work of its kind to record some thoughts on

80 *Disquisitio historica de librorum circa res theologicas approbatione*, 8vo, Antwerp, 1708.
81 See *Lettres écrites à un seigneur anglais au sujet des Camisards*, 8vo, Regensburg, 1705, second letter, pp. 31–32.
82 *Renversement des libertés de l'église gallicane par la constitution Unigenitus*, vol. I, p. 544.

this very subject. "In an empire," says the author, "functions differ: some depend on the agreement of the whole nation, others the nation entrusts to a small number. ... A nation's renunciation of its rights, of its sovereignty, can be made only by universal consent."

The principles just stated establish the legitimacy of any government's title, whenever the people delegate, modify, or change the exercise of sovereignty — for which reason they were included in the first edition of *Les Ruines de Port-Royal* in 1801. This did not, however, stop a certain Abbé du Vauxcelles, in the new edition of Madame de Sévigné's letters, and a certain Abbé J***, from railing furiously against the author. Of these two pamphleteers, the latter is still living, and no doubt his zeal is not yet spent; let us hope he will soon enrich France with a new pamphlet (for imposture is always anonymous) against this new edition of the *Ruines*. He is especially advised not to forget the words "heresy" and "sedition" — two talismans by which timid souls are frightened and the ignorant dazzled, that is to say, three-quarters of the human race.

Among the duties recognized at Port-Royal was the work of education — education, whose results easily settle the question of who deserves better of his country: the man who merely adds to the mass of the population, or the man who makes that population useful. Religious education, without which all your repressive laws, your courts, your scaffolds will never be enough to secure public tranquility; all your supposedly liberal institutions, all your theories on the nature and source of virtue, will be swept away in a flood of every vice and every crime! Look at the state of France, and dare to argue the contrary. Because these truths are as undeniable as they are commonplace, must we therefore fear to repeat them?

The schools of this abbey were concerned equally with forming the heart and developing the mind. In the last century, attention was focused almost exclusively on the latter — hence so many men dazzling in wit yet repulsive in their vices; hence writers whose talents threaten public morality, men who, in Miss Williams's words, "long to bind their brows with a withered crown, and to obtain in the temple of fame an altar at which only impure hands dare burn incense."

Schools having always been a favorite concern of Port-Royal, the friends of this house promoted them as far as lay in their power. Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, had established schoolmistresses who, bound by no vows but those of baptism, dressed as laywomen and

living as saints, were objects of general esteem.[83] The renowned schools of the Tabourin brothers, on the Rue de Lappe near the Porte Saint-Antoine, had been founded by d'Arboulin, chief clerk of the Cour des Aides — the same man who founded the house called Agterclarenburg at Utrecht.

The harshest punishment inflicted in the novitiate and the schools of Port-Royal, and in those the solitaries had established in neighboring villages, was the threat of expulsion. There, play and study were blended together so as to make study loved.[84] Father Comblat, visiting the pupils, was struck by the purity of their style and the precision of their minds. "These young gentlemen," he said, "when spoken to, go straight to the point."

From these schools came a host of men who distinguished themselves in the clergy, in the law, and in other professions. Racine the tragedian was educated there under the eyes of Nicole, who taught philosophy and the humanities — on this occasion Racine published the *Delectus epigrammatum*. Lancelot taught Greek and mathematics. Arnauld, Pascal, and Nicole, who upheld the glory of our language so brilliantly, were never members of the Académie Française — where, certainly, they would never have voted to set as a competition topic "Which of Louis XIV's virtues was the most brilliant." After Racine and Despréaux, the friends of Port-Royal were almost entirely excluded from the Académie Française, no doubt because the bishops who had submitted to the bull held sway there. Gaillard, in his *Mélanges historiques*, notes that the Abbé de La Bletterie was refused admission on grounds of Jansenism, at the urging of the Jesuits and of the pedantic persecutor Gaillande.[85] To the Port-Royalists was left the Académie des Inscriptions, of which La Bletterie, the younger Racine, and Foncemagne were distinguished members.

For a century and a half, virtually every man France produced who was illustrious in the Church, at the bar, or in letters was proud to claim descent from the school of Port-Royal. It was this school that, by directing the combined efforts of the magistracy and of the soundest part of the clergy, raised a double barrier against the encroachments of political despotism and of ultramontane despotism alike. Should we be surprised, then, that the men we have just discussed were, generally speaking, friends of liberty during the Revolution?

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83 See *Relation d'un voyage d'Aleth*, by Lancelot, a Benedictine of Saint-Cyran, pp. 66–73.
84 Clémencet, vol. II, p. 502.
85 *Mélanges historiques*, 4 vols., Paris, 1806, vol. II, p. 506.

The *Lettres provinciales*, as a work of polemic, are a far superior model to the *Letters of Junius* so much praised by the English, whose author — long hidden behind anonymity — appears to have been a Mr. Boyd,[86] who died recently in Bengal. The *Provinciales* are commonly cited as marking an era in the fixing of our language. In every book that came out of this school, the language displays its grace and its richness: one finds in them neither that labored, convoluted style which Thomas — a writer estimable in other respects — made fashionable, nor those affectations of wit that give so many writings the tone of a collection of epigrams. Instead, the freshness and brilliance of a style fitted to its subject adorn works whose well-conceived structure produces reasoning that, by its solidity and coherence, commands the assent of reason itself.

While Pascal was rising to the loftiest heights of mathematical thought, Tillemont was writing the history of the Church and of the emperors; d'Andilly was translating the writers of Greece and Rome; Nicole was probing the depths of the human heart; Arnauld, the depths of metaphysics and the theory of ideas; Lancelot, the depths of language. From this came that *General Grammar*, that *Logic*, those elementary textbooks which are still the admiration of scholars, which won the admiration of the editors of the *Encyclopédie*, and which will win that of the most distant posterity. I am sure I will be forgiven for inserting here the fine passage from Gerbier's pleading in the lawsuit concerning Nicole's foundation:

> *It was in this nursery of great men that Arnauld, Pascal, Nicole, Racine, and others composed those masterpieces which secured for France the superiority she enjoys over every other nation. Scholars still go there to seek the elements of our language and of every science; the man of letters himself draws from that source the art of reasoning and of eloquence; the good man, in whatever land he was born, finds there the unfolding of that pure morality whose seed heaven planted in every heart. However deeply these men buried themselves in the profoundest solitude, however thick a veil they drew over their sublime works, praise was lavished on them by the most enlightened prelates, by the most respectable magistrates — even by those who depart furthest from their maxims and their example. Immortal men! Receive the tribute of veneration that we all eagerly offer you in this cause! The nation's regret will never cease to honor your tomb…*

86 See the *Annual Asiatic Register* for 1799.

The influence of this school on the perfection of our language, the purity of taste, the love of sound learning, and the progress of the human mind toward all that is beautiful and all that is good, would make a most curious subject for further study.

The writers of Port-Royal freed theology from the rubbish of indecent, silly, and absurd questions. Thomas, already cited, brings out how successfully they had applied to the study of languages their virile and austere philosophy.[87]

The Class of French Literature of the Institute has recently and solemnly declared that "the philosophical sciences were founded in France by Port-Royal — a source as inexhaustible as it is pure, to which all sound doctrine and all classical literature alike must trace their origin."[88]

87 See his *Œuvres posthumes*, 2 vols., 8vo, Paris, 1802, vol. II, pp. 33, 54.
88 See Chénier's *Discours à l'Empereur*, p. 5.

Chapter VIII Clarifications on Various Historical Facts Relating to the History of Port-Royal. The Falsified Medal Struck for the Peace of Clement IX. — The Falsified Acts of the Council of Rome in 1725. — Pious Bequests Known as the "Boîte à Perrette." — The Direction of Souls, Considered as a Function Separate from Confession. — The Law of Silence.

Falsification of the Medal Struck on the Occasion of the Peace of Clement IX

The four bishops — Buzanval of Beauvais, Pavillon of Alet, Caulet of Pamiers, and Arnauld of Angers — who had opposed the plain and simple signing of the formularies of Innocent X and Alexander VII, backed by nineteen of their colleagues, offered Clement IX to subscribe to them with the distinction between matters of right and matters of fact. The Pope declared that the Holy See did not require anyone to believe that the five condemned propositions were actually in Jansenius's book, but only to hold them as heretical and to condemn them wherever they might be found. He was so pleased with the conduct of these prelates that, by a brief of September 27, 1668, he gave them particular marks of his goodwill; and Louis XIV, by a council decree dated October 23 of the same year, declared that His Holiness was satisfied.

The long-desired peace was announced throughout France amid extraordinary rejoicing; freedom and the sacraments were restored to those who had been deprived of them, their posts to the doctors who had been expelled, and the memory of this event was transmitted to posterity by a medal which, on the king's order, Colbert had struck the following year.

On one side it bears the image of Louis XIV; on the other, a radiant dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit who presided over this act. Below is an altar on which lies an open Bible, and upon the Bible are the keys of St. Peter in saltire, together with the scepter and the hand of justice, to signify the concurrence of ecclesiastical and royal authority.

The legend reads *Gratia et pax a Deo* — grace and peace come from God. The exergue reads *Ob restitutam ecclesiæ concordiam* — as a monument to the peace restored to the Church — with the date 1669 below; this encompasses Rome and her theologians as much as the bishops and clergy of France.

This medal, which has become rare, was engraved in 1701 as the frontispiece to Quesnel's work on the Peace of Clement IX, and by the Abbé Ballin, canon of Saint-Louis-du-Louvre, at the head of a summary he published on this subject;[89] but before that it had been included by Sébastien Le Clerc in his engravings of medals in 1682. Father Ménestrier, a Jesuit, having in 1689 published an edition of a *History of Louis XIV by Medals*, likewise included this one — though explaining the Peace of Clement IX in his own fashion. In the 1693 edition he added new falsehoods, but at least the medal still appears there.

The Jesuits and their supporters, angered by this peace and still more by the medal that perpetuated its memory, found a way to substitute for it another one with significant alterations. It presents the same design, it is true, but the legend and exergue have been changed: the legend now reads *Restituta ecclesiæ gallicanæ concordia* — the concord restored in the Church of France — and the exergue gives simply the date M.D.C.LXIX.

By this it is clear that in suppressing the significant words *Gratia et pax a Deo*, the very substance of the matters in dispute is obscured, and the true object of the peace is set aside. Secondly, by restricting the word "Church" with the word "Gallican," it implies that France alone was concerned in this dispute, and that no truths were at issue in which the whole Church had a share; and finally, it seems to suggest that it is from the Roman curia, as infallible arbiter in matters of faith, that the Church of France receives its peace.

The Jesuits managed to carry this alteration even into the explanation published in 1702 by the Académie des Inscriptions in a collection of medals: there it is said that disputes having arisen among theologians, the Church was threatened with great scandal — with no mention either of the papal briefs or of the royal decree, while the Church is said to have enjoyed an entire peace.

In the 1723 edition, by contrast, it is no longer among all theologians but only among those of France that disputes had arisen; the scandal no longer concerns the whole Church; the Holy Father addressed several briefs to the prelates of the realm; and the king issued decrees that restored the Gallican Church to its former tranquility.

89 A *lettre de cachet* forbade this worthy churchman from attending chapter meetings — which in fact saved his life, for as dean of the chapter he would certainly have been present at the session in which seven of his colleagues were crushed by the sudden collapse of the meeting room ceiling.

"Thus," adds Abbé Ballin, "truths are obscured, and political and human considerations often gain the upper hand."

One author asserts that the papal nuncio having complained of the original medal, Louis XIV ordered the die destroyed. The Académie thereupon, in its 1723 edition, changed the explanation it had given in 1702. The instrument of this iniquity was de Boze, who, being indebted to the Jesuits, sacrificed to them both his own honor and that of the Académie.[90]

The former bishop of Alais, in his *Histoire de Fénelon*, cites another instance of de Boze's cowardice: in 1715, having succeeded Fénelon at the Académie Française, he did not dare to mention the *Télémaque* in his acceptance speech, and the director Dacier kept the same silence.[91]

These facts leave on de Boze an indelible stigma — and such is the fate reserved for the many men who resemble him.

The monuments attesting the existence of the original medal on the Peace of Clement IX will outlast the centuries and will prove forever that iniquity lied to itself. Who can fail to be astonished, after this, at the boldness with which certain reckless writers and certain doctors of the modern Sorbonne have branded that peace as fictitious and illusory — despite its being attested by the most authentic monument possible — or at seeing a bishop (notably Gaston-Fleuriau, Bishop of Orléans) declare in a mandate of March 1, 1729, that peace in the Church was never granted under Clement IX, never suffered by Louis XIV, and never recognized by any tribunal? Is this ignorance, or is it malice?

Falsification of the Acts of the Council Held at Rome in 1725

In 1725, under Benedict XIII, a council was held whose acts contain a statement that the bull *Unigenitus* had the character of a rule of faith. Word immediately spread that this clause was an interpolation inserted into the acts without the council's consent.

On January 2, 1761, the prelate Bottari, secret chamberlain to Benedict XIV and chief keeper of the Vatican Library, set down in a letter — which has since been printed — what he knew on this subject. Its substance is as follows: he was not a member of the council, but knew all its details, for every evening he was with the council's theologians at the home of Feroni, who

90 See *Mémoires historiques et chronologiques*, vol. II.
91 See the *Histoire de Fénelon* by M. de Bausset, former Bishop of Alais, 3 vols., 8vo, Paris, 1808, vol. II, p. 173.

later became a cardinal. The kind of obedience owed to the bull was discussed there, and it was never presented as a rule of faith. Bottari cites various testimonies, and above all that of Benedict XIV, with whom he had spent every day for fifteen years. He had heard this pope say "that he wished to leave an authentic memorandum, signed and sealed, to refute the falsehood of the assertion inserted into the council's acts" — but he had been dissuaded from doing so by a prelate.

The author of the *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique* asks why Cardinal Fini, to whom this falsification is attributed, was not punished when he was arrested.[92] The answer to this objection is found in Bottari's own letter.

Fini, who had been confined to the Jesuit novitiate as his prison, complained to Cardinal Davia of being persecuted and oppressed. Davia replied that his eminence should remember what he had done in that holy place — for it was there that the alteration of the council's acts had been carried out, in the presence of Fini (then secretary of the Roman council), Father Vitri (a French Jesuit), and Cardinal Pico (a devoted supporter of the Jesuits). This fact was recounted by Cardinal Davia himself, before several witnesses, to the prelate Bottari, who, at Rome, before the notary Louis Ricci, attested under oath, his hand on his breast, the truth of what he had set down in his letter.

Another fact lends support to this account: Louis XV, in a declaration of 1756 enjoining silence on the matter, declared that "the bull by its nature has not had and cannot have either the name, the character, or the effects of a rule of faith." The civil authority is incompetent to pronounce on this article; but he sent this declaration to Pope Benedict XIV, who, by a brief of January 5, 1757, responding to the king, lavished upon him expressions of admiration for the wisdom of the measures he had taken, and approved them.

On these facts, which are very open to verification, the reader may form his own judgment.

The "Boîte à Perrette"

This name is given to capital sums or properties whose proceeds are designated for pious purposes and which have been bequeathed to individuals — sometimes one alone, more often two or three together. In the latter case, the legatees hold the assets jointly; but in either case they are regarded by law as the owners. The testator's guarantee that the funds will be

92 Vol. I, p. 167.

properly used lies in the moral character of the legatees. The first such fund originated with Nicole, who, near death, entrusted its administration to his housekeeper — a woman of remarkable spirit and piety by the name of Perrette: hence the name *Boîte à Perrette*, or "Perrette's Box."

Various foundations of the same kind were established in Paris, Auxerre, Aix, Toulouse, and other cities in France and beyond, to support the poor, assist young clergymen without means in their studies, fund schools, and distribute good books.

Around 1785, a will burdened with several such bequests was challenged by the heirs, who sought to have it annulled. The proceedings led back to the origins of these assets, transmitted by a kind of trust, whose use was vindicated by the celebrated Gerbier — on which occasion he delivered the magnificent eulogy of Port-Royal quoted earlier in this work.

Two simultaneous causes have reduced these bequests — divided among some thirty individuals — to very little: first, the assignat regime, which, in the eyes of the law but not always before the tribunal of conscience, legitimized repayments made in discredited paper currency; and second, the divisions caused by the oath required of the clergy in 1791, which split into two parties both the clergymen and laypeople entrusted with these bequests. Some, fearing that the funds would be swallowed up in the upheavals of the Revolution, thought it right to liquidate even the principal. This extinguished, among others, the funds of the Tabourin brothers, charged with the Christian schools on the Rue de Lappe in Paris. Other legatees made imprudent distributions among themselves, certainly contrary to the founders' intentions: would they have approved, for instance, of a man entrusted with a very considerable sum from these bequests spending ten thousand francs — partly to build an altar at the house of the Christian Doctrine in Paris, and partly to purchase horses and a carriage for the congregation's superior? Thus, foundations justified by their purpose — preserved for a century — have in our own day nearly died out. Their founders, wrapping themselves in secrecy, found in this a double advantage: performing an act of humility while evading the persecutions that weighed on every friend of Port-Royal.

The Direction of Souls, Considered as a Function Separate from Confession

In ecclesiastical parlance, "confessor" and "spiritual director" commonly convey the same idea; yet in the last century a practice arose that often gave them different meanings. The director, through his counsel, regulated the conduct of those who confided in him and prepared them to receive communion by having them accept the penance and absolution given by the confessor alone. It is easy to see that this division of functions, requiring from the penitent the same degree of trust and submission toward both director and confessor, imposed on both an equal obligation of secrecy. A similar ministry to that of the director had long been exercised by the heads of monasteries of either sex, where the rule required members to confess their faults.

This modified practice spread among the faithful in France when subscription to the formulary and the bull was demanded. Several thousand of the most virtuous and learned priests having been exiled, imprisoned, stripped of their offices, or placed under interdict, they were replaced by men less versed in the principles Arnauld had set out concerning communion than in the lax maxims subsequently proclaimed by Father Pichon. Standards in France were declining on all sides, promising in future nothing but a clergy fallen from the glory that had distinguished the age of Bossuet. A great many clergymen set over the guidance of souls — ministers of impenitence, one might call them — adopted a practical morality all the more accommodating because it served as a touchstone to prove they were not what people called Jansenists; and this opened the door to favor and dignities. The most hideous excesses against morals were more or less forgivable; but to doubt whether five propositions, unknown to most of the faithful, were to be found in a Latin book that most could not read — that was an unpardonable crime, the subject of captious and multiplied questionings by which penitents were harassed. To lead an austere, that is to say a Christian life, was the infallible symptom of Jansenism: it aroused suspicion and barred the way to dignity. From this period above all date those refusals of the sacraments which caused such an uproar in the last century, gave rise to so many writings, and drew so many tears.

In this state of affairs, a great many of the faithful, caught between the impossibility of turning to their own pastors who were under interdict and the fear of entrusting their consciences to ignorant and lax men, devised the practice of revealing the state of their souls to the interdicted priests, following their counsel, and resorting to the ministry of the others only when the first-mentioned guides — the directors — judged that the penitents were ready to

receive an absolution that was otherwise so easily obtained, and to receive the Eucharist, which was being dispensed so freely; at which point they would tell them, as the lepers in the Gospel were told, to go and present themselves to the priests seated on the chair of Moses. This occurred especially in the larger cities, to which many interdicted clergy had retreated.

The priests, barred from the functions of their ministry, had submitted peaceably to decisions dictated by episcopal despotism; but learned canonists, having examined what the laws of the Church authorize in a time of persecution, published scholarly writings on arbitrary interdicts. Those of Maultrot and Tabareau may profitably be consulted. In tracing the principles of the hierarchy to their roots and probing the rights of the priesthood, it is easy to assess Louis XIV's ordinance of 1695 on the approval of confessors — an edict which the upper clergy had obtained at the cost of a few millions. Had it been enacted a century later by the representatives of the nation, it would have been met with anathema; for, according to the varying circumstances and interests of the day, principles have, for certain people, an infinite flexibility.

Such, then, is the practice of direction separate from confession. The only work I know that addresses it is a short anonymous piece entitled *Entretien sur le devoir pascal*, 8vo, 1759, published without place of publication. The precept of annual communion fixes it at Easter; but the obligation imposed by the Fourth Lateran Council to confess at least once a year to one's own pastor does not determine a fixed time for this. The diocesan statutes of Paris recommend doing so shortly before Lent. If this own pastor is known for his laxity, says the anonymous author, one must not compromise one's salvation; one must have recourse to men versed in the ways of God and instructed in the rules of the Church. If you have reason to think that this confessor will wish to absolve you when your own conscience tells you plainly that you are unworthy of it, the Church dispenses you from going to him — for between failing to fulfill the precept in order to avoid committing sacrilege, and committing sacrilege in order to fulfill the precept, there is no room for hesitation.

The habit of opening one's heart to clergymen who, in preparing the faithful to receive absolution, confined themselves to the functions of director, often led to this practice being continued even after the circumstances that had given rise to it had disappeared. A very worthy priest named Sanson directed in Paris and the surrounding area some seven or eight hundred persons, a great number of whom had as confessor another churchman of the same

stamp, a certain Massy, former parish priest of the parish of Saint-Martin in the town of Saint-Denis. Both died recently. Others, it is said, have taken their place in the functions to which they had devoted themselves, in several dioceses where the persecutions over the bull have given way to persecutions of a different kind.

The Law of Silence

The injunction to keep silence on doctrinal points is nothing new: we see the leaders of the synagogue forbidding the apostles to preach in the name of Jesus — to which they reply that it is better to obey God than men. The *Henoticon* of Zeno, the *Typos* of Constans, and the *Ecthesis* of Heraclius — three edicts issued by Roman emperors — all prescribed silence on contested matters. Pope Honorius had even approved the *Ecthesis* and declared that only one will was to be recognized in Jesus Christ; thus monothelitism, triumphant, was protected both by the purple and by the tiara. A simple monk, Sophronius, raised his voice and vindicated the truth that others sought to hold captive.

Pope Clement VIII imposed silence on the disputes caused by Molina's book. Peter Lombard, Archbishop of Armagh, laid before Paul V a substantial memorandum setting out the drawbacks of this measure, which compromised sound doctrine. Lanuza presented a similar one in the same sense to Philip II of Spain; and the Faculty of Theology at Douai set out the same principles in a work composed by Estius.

In 1702 appeared the famous "case of conscience." It supposed a clergyman who condemned the five propositions in every sense condemned by the Church, but who, on the matter of fact regarding Jansenius, believed that respectful silence was sufficient. Forty doctors of the Sorbonne having approved this view, Noailles demanded a retraction from them, which all signed except one. Clement XI issued in 1705 the bull *Vineam Domini*, in which he declared that respectful silence was insufficient to satisfy what the apostolic constitutions required. Fresh debates ensued: everyone agreed that the five propositions must be condemned both in mind and heart — but, people asked, are they actually to be found in Jansenius? Fouilloux published three volumes justifying respectful silence. Fénelon, in a pastoral letter, maintained that this work bore rebellion on its face.

On the other side, with a view to ending the disputes, royal declarations were issued at various times imposing absolute silence: one in 1703, another in 1717 at the instigation of Cardinal de La Trémoille.

Silence was again prescribed by declarations of 1720, 1754, and 1756. The last of these, dated December 10, required that the provisions concerning the bull be carried out without its being attributed either the name or the effects of a rule of faith. It has already been noted above that Louis XV, having sent it to Benedict XIV, received from that pope a letter of January 5, 1757, in which Benedict approved it and showered the king with praise. The same silence was ordered by the Empress Maria Theresa and by Joseph II; it had already been ordered by the Kings of Naples and Sardinia, the latter having seized the temporal possessions within his territories of the Bishop of Grenoble for having required Savoyards under his diocese to sign the formulary.[93]

The 1756 ordinance found a defender in Le Paige, a distinguished canonist. The Abbé Guidi was one of its opponents: they argued that the law was defective because of the arbitrary application made of it, that it encroached on the Gallican liberties, and that love of truth obliges one to bear public witness to it. In short, much was spoken and written about silence, and all that results from these details is that it was successively ordered and condemned, and that on the same subject people were required in turn to speak and to hold their peace.

An essential clause of the various laws of silence was always that the warring parties should be equally bound by them. Such a measure would have a genuine character of wisdom if applied to the disputes that, since the Constituent Assembly, have divided the French clergy. How often has one side said to the other: let us forget the whole past, let us merge our feelings and our hearts in the embrace of Christian charity; let us hasten to gather our forces so as to fight together against the ignorance, the indifference, and the unbelief that are encroaching upon France on every side; let us stifle forever divisions that serve as a pretext for bad Christians and as a cause of triumph for the enemies of the Gospel.

These most tender appeals, always rejected, at last seemed to promise complete success when they were sanctioned by a law emanating from both powers; but one of the contending parties almost always attached to it the express or tacit condition of forcing the other to admit that it

93 See Duclos's *Mémoires*, p. 24.

had been in error. Such is the motive behind the persecutions prolonged in part of France. Vainly is that peace so longed-for invoked, if bitterness constantly reawakens divisions behind the veil of secrecy that the tribunal of penance commands; if pastoral letters and sermons are woven through with allusions whose meaning is not in doubt; if through open acts insults are multiplied against the character and principles of pastors who have followed a different path; if, instead of quitting the field of polemic and leaving to history the impartial record of events, one turns history into a brief drawn up under the auspices of hatred — can the aggressors then complain of the vigorous and just defense that their own wrongs have provoked?

Among the many citations that crowd upon the pen, I confine myself to the following.

At Lyon in 1801 there was printed, under the title *Anecdotes chrétiennes*,[94] a collection in which named bishops are disparaged for having taken the oath. In 1804 it was being distributed as a catechism prize at the parish of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont in Paris. Should anyone deny this, material proof and the signature of a priest named Drouot will be produced.

In 1806 appeared two thick volumes of *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique pendant le 18e siècle*,[95] by a very well-known anonymous author. Its apparent double purpose is to slander and brand by name everyone who dares to find merit in Port-Royal and everyone who took the oath of 1791. Yet this work is announced and praised even in the liturgical calendar of the diocese of Paris for the year 1807.

These facts — to which several hundred others could be added, gathered from various parts of France — call for no commentary. They are submitted to the reflection of fair-minded people, for whom the words *peace*, *truth*, and *justice* are not empty of meaning.

94 12mo, Lyon, 1801.
95 2 vols., 8vo, Paris, 1806, published by Leclère.

Chapter IX The Present State of What Is Called Jansenism in Holland, on the Island of Nordstrand, and in Various Parts of Europe. What Meaning Is Attached There to the Label "Jansenist." Prayers for the Peace of the Church.

The Church of Holland

The disputes between Jansenists and Molinists never led to an open rupture of communion — except in the small island of Nordstrand, to be discussed presently, and in Holland, where for about a century the two parties have each had their separate churches.

The so-called Reformation unleashed in that country a violent storm against Catholics, who suffered unheard-of vexations and, to add to their distress, saw nearly the entire regular clergy betray its duty. Although there were at least 166 houses of canons regular and monks, only two Franciscans could be found with courage enough to provide the faithful with the sacraments.[96] The secular clergy was a different matter: its members, numbering about six hundred, remained faithful to their faith and their calling and continued to fulfill their ministry.

The monks, and the Jesuits above all, wishing to remain independent, had always opposed the authority of bishops; the secular clergy, by contrast, having a thorough understanding of the true nature and necessity of hierarchical order, and persuaded that episcopal governance is an indispensable part of it, succeeded in maintaining it amid the storms — and Holland always had bishops who were, it is true, stripped of their temporal revenues, but who possessed spiritual goods, the only ones Jesus Christ ever left to His Church. Since the difficulties of the times had not permitted all the sees to be filled, they confined themselves to consecrating prelates for Utrecht, Haarlem, and Deventer — despite the opposition of monks who wanted no bishops, despite the Roman curia which wished to reduce Holland to the status of a mission territory and govern it directly through nuncios, and despite the nuncios of Cologne who, through the monks as intermediaries, thwarted the hierarchical order and lavished excommunications and interdicts. The Protestants, on their side, fanned the divisions among

96 See the excellent *Histoire abrégée de l'église métropolitaine d'Utrecht*, 8vo, Utrecht, 1765 (by Dupac de Bellegarde, canon, count of Lyon, etc.), pp. 53ff.

Catholics in order to weaken them. Thus the nuncios, the monks, and the Protestants — driven by different motives — all worked toward the same end, and succeeded only too well.

Anonymous pamphlets, anonymous letters, and forged writings are the tools that hatred and baseness always employ. The enemies of the episcopal clergy fabricated and circulated at Rome a supposed pastoral letter of the Archbishop of Utrecht, written in such a way as to provoke justified indignation against him. He hastened to expose the imposture.

Whenever a prelate is elected to one of the three sees, a respectful letter is at once addressed to the pope, who never fails to respond with censures — Clement XIV being an exception, whose peaceful dispositions were well known; people liked to draw a parallel between him and Adrian VI, the only pope Holland has ever given to the Church, who, upon ascending the chair of St. Peter, had reprinted without alteration the work in which, as a professor at Louvain, he had argued that the pope is not infallible.

The Roman curia was sometimes very poorly served by the reports sent to it by the dissidents of Holland, which led to strange blunders. In a brief directed against the very public consecration of Book, Bishop of Haarlem, it was stated that the ceremony had taken place clandestinely at a layman's house, and that a curate of Amsterdam (Donker, I believe), having attended it, had been struck dead on the spot. The curate, greatly surprised to learn that he is dead, mounts his pulpit and reads the brief to his parishioners.

These consecrations were always given the most authentic publicity — and it will not be learned without surprise that the archpriest of Jung, current parish priest of Saint-Gertrude at Utrecht, holding a notarial patent from Pope Pius VI himself, attended in that capacity the consecration of the last archbishop, who died recently.

It is noteworthy that in the acts of the Roman curia against the bishops of Holland, they are never reproached with being Jansenists; neither the formulary nor the bull is mentioned. Nevertheless, Father Mozzi, a Jesuit, in his history of the Church of Utrecht, inserted a letter from a cardinal stating that the pope would recognize their legitimacy if they were willing to sign the formulary... "He would recognize their legitimacy; therefore they are legitimate," someone has remarked.

They and their clergy, above all Broedersen,[97] have published a great many works establishing this canonical legitimacy — grounded in strict observance of the rules of pure and holy antiquity — and demonstrating that the sentences pronounced against them are void for want of any crime, for procedural irregularity, and by virtue of their appeal to an ecumenical council. This question has been freshly debated in recent times by one of the current parish priests of Amersfoort, by Nauta, parish priest of Zaandam,[98] and by Karsten, a layman, in a very piquant pamphlet[99] in which he covered with ridicule that unfortunate Van Eupen who, after playing a part in the troubles of Belgium, wished to meddle in the affairs of the Batavian church. Karsten demonstrates that the clergy, as guardian of its church's rights, can neither surrender nor alter them.

In former times, a fairly large number of learned French clergy and laymen — driven there by persecution or by the desire for edification — had united with this clergy: Le Gros, Dupac de Bellegarde (who, together with the Abbé d'H****, currently in Paris, published the edition of Arnauld's works), d'Étemare, Mouton, du Sellier, Anquetil du Perron, and many others. At this moment the church is reduced to its own resources.

In 1763 it held a national council, whose acts — printed several times — have lately found a defender in the current Bishop of Königsgrätz, Trantmandorf.[100] That same year the church published a collection of various testimonials rendered to it by cardinals, archbishops, bishops, universities, and others.[101] It is claimed that were it to publish a continuation of this work — for which the materials are already assembled — readers would be surprised to find in it some very distinguished names they would not have suspected.

The episcopal clergy has maintained a seminary at Amersfoort since 1720.

Out of a population of approximately one million eight hundred thousand souls, Holland counts at least three hundred thousand Catholics — Jansenists and Molinists together. The latter, far more numerous, are to some degree outside the circle of the Catholic hierarchy; they are directed, some by monks, others by secular priests under the supervision of a nuncio.

97 See *Quinque tractatus historici*, etc., by Nic. Broedersen, 3 vols., 4to, Delft, 1720.
98 See *Antwoord op het geschrift*, etc., Amsterdam, 8vo, 1784.
99 *Triumph der roomsch-gezinden op de Jansenisten*, etc., 8vo.
100 See his *Treatise on ecclesiastical and civil toleration*, translated into French by Poan-Saint-Simon.
101 4to, Utrecht, 1763.

For a long time the secular clergy and many of their parishioners have grown weary of this state of anarchy. At various periods they have pressed Rome for bishops, notably in recent years through the intermediary of a respected and worthy man, Stafford, dean of the chapter of Haarlem — which the pope refuses to recognize as a chapter, even though it is subject to the nuncio. These efforts have been fruitless, which is attributed in part to the influence of the superiors-general of the religious orders, spurred on by the Dutch monks who resist episcopacy by every means at their disposal. These monks, intractable, ignorant, and held in low esteem in Holland, are dwindling in number because the suppressions carried out in Brabant and other countries have deprived them of the means to recruit. The secular clergy has several seminaries. At that of Warmond near Leiden, a few years ago, Lexius, a doctor from Louvain, taught — a man estimable for his doctrine as for his conduct. The same praise is owed to other clergymen of the same persuasion: two of their priests, Stafford of Haarlem and Schouten, parish priest at Alkmaar, have published several short works. The latter, in a piece against the Calvinists, admits that whoever accepts the Profession of Faith of Pius IV is a true Catholic in the true religion — which amounts to accusing himself and his own party of schism in distancing themselves from the Jansenists, who do indeed accept that Profession of Faith. But does prejudice ever reason? It has been observed that between religious bodies distinguished from one another only by nuances, hatred runs higher than against those at a great distance. The Molinists furnish yet another proof of this: they are less opposed to Protestants than to their Jansenist brothers, and forbid their flocks to read Jansenist works. The Jansenists, by contrast, invite debate and encourage the reading of their adversaries' writings. The Molinists do, however, adopt a Dutch translation of the Bible[102] made by Verschut, a Jansenist priest — but they reportedly place it in the faithful's hands only after tearing out the frontispiece, which bears these words of Scripture: The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.[103]

On entering a Catholic church in Holland, one immediately sees which party it belongs to: if there is only one altar, as in the practice of the primitive Church preserved among the Greek-Catholics of both rites; if in the choral office sung antiphonally by both sexes a profound recollection and a moving piety manifest themselves in every attitude — you are among the Jansenists. It is true that this character does not belong to them exclusively, but only in a

102 *Biblia sacra, dat is heilige schrift van het oude en 't nieuwe testament*, folio, Utrecht, 1732.
103 Gospel of St. John, ch. 1, v. 17.

more marked degree. A multiplicity of side-chapels, instrumental music, Mass celebrated hurriedly, and practices that are petty and not authorized by the Church announce a Molinist church.

During the course of the French Revolution, it frequently happened that priests who had taken the oath refused to admit to first communion children who were ignorant or immoral; these then turned to the dissidents, where they were certain of being promptly received. The same thing happens in Holland, especially with absolution, which is more easily obtained among the Molinists. The author of this work collected in that country the following anecdote. Among those wretched creatures given over to debauchery who give so hideous an aspect to large cities, there are in Amsterdam Catholic women who, as Easter approaches, renounce their disorders for a few days in order to be admitted to communion. It is commonly the third Sunday after Easter that bears, for this reason, the name of the communion of the... The preceding details make it unnecessary to specify to which clergy they apply.

In the diocese of Utrecht, abstinence even from eggs is observed during Lent among the Jansenists, while the opposing party sometimes permits the eating of meat. The laxity of one side and the evangelical austerity of the other have swelled the Molinist flock and diminished the Jansenist one — which never consented to sacrifice the rule to worldly considerations.

The French émigrés who made their way to Holland, holding on the contested matters the same divergence of opinions as the Catholics of that country, divided among themselves in their choice of churches. Some, such as the président Robert de Saint-Vincent, attended services at the Jansenist church; Barentin, first president of the Cour des Aides, who attended the Molinist church, had a letter delivered to Saint-Vincent threatening him with the Stadholder's displeasure if he continued to frequent the archbishop's church. Saint-Vincent paid no heed, and sent word to Barentin that he ought to recall how in France such acts of schism had been repressed in recent times. The Abbé Noguez, author of a new plan for a breviary, lodging with the Marquise de Poultry, attended the churches of both parties; he had pressed the archbishop to publish a pastoral letter against the constitutional clergy and had offered to draft it himself — he was refused. At the same time, ten to twelve émigré bishops assembled at The Hague were being incited by the nuncio Brancadoro to hold a council against the Jansenists. A certain Nicodemus, secretary to one of these bishops, made them see

that this attempt, by provoking fresh disturbances, might brand them as troublemakers in the eyes of the Batavian government — and the plan for a council quietly dissolved.

For the first time in a century, confirmation had been administered among the Molinists by a dissident bishop — the nuncio Brancadoro. The sacrament was administered so indiscriminately that even Protestants were scandalized. The Protestant Stadholder's court had brought in this nuncio and authorized him to function everywhere, hoping he would tie Catholics to the House of Orange: to serve this political purpose, he published a pastoral letter in which he spoke in the Stadholder's favor; the monks hawked and published it, but in general it was poorly received by the secular clergy. Several parish priests, especially in the province of Groningen, and the archpriest of Amsterdam refused to publish it.

The Island of Nordstrand

I promised a few words on the island of Nordstrand, situated on the coast of the Duchy of Schleswig and subject to Denmark. In 1634 it had been submerged by the sea; Belgians obtained permission in 1652 to build dikes there and settle; four years later they were joined by some Jansenists fleeing Jesuit persecution, as Mollerus records in his *Cimbria Litterata*.[104]

Some solitaries of Port-Royal wished to place their capital there, a plan that came to nothing after giving rise to many calumnies, the details of which may be read in Clémencet and Guilbert. The Catholics there nevertheless maintained themselves and submitted to the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Utrecht, though at a great distance from that city — but the division among the Catholics of Holland spread to Nordstrand as well.[105]

A fairly corrupted form of Dutch is spoken on the island, and sermons are delivered in that language. The population consists of about seven hundred Lutherans and three hundred Catholics, two-thirds of whom, of the nuncio's party, are governed by Oratorians from Brabant — fourteen in 1796, reduced to two by 1805. The remaining Catholics, together with some who inhabit Frederikstad on the mainland, remain subject to the Bishop of Utrecht, whose clergy also holds some property on the island. The parish priest is elected by the landowners from among three candidates presented by the archbishop; his clergy alone has the right to bury Catholics of both parties.

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104 Vol. II, p. 149.
105 See *Acta historico-ecclesiastica*, 8vo, Weimar, 1743, vol. VII, p. 88, and vol. XIX, p. 149.

Around 1794, the Propaganda, through the nuncio in Vienna, had a memorandum delivered to the Danish ambassador to disparage and strip of their church these Jansenists of Nordstrand. The memorandum, sent to Copenhagen, was forwarded by the government to the bailiff of the island and the parish priest. The latter communicated it to the archbishop, who produced the documents on which his spiritual jurisdiction rested. The Lutheran bailiff, indignant at the accusations directed against what he considered the most estimable inhabitants of the island, gave them the most favorable testimony; his reply became that of the Danish government, which had it conveyed to the nuncio through its ambassador in Vienna. These details were obtained from the parish priest of Nordstrand himself.

At various times attempts have been made to reunite the two parties that divide and weaken the Church of Holland. A new project presented four years ago by a foreign bishop had already won the support of certain persons who might effectively have contributed to this good work; but soon afterward some young clergymen became involved in the affair — men who would deserve only praise if maturity of judgment and modesty adorned their good qualities. What has come of their pamphlets? Presumption on one side, rash zeal on the other — the only result was to compromise the principles involved and perhaps to delay a peace so much to be desired. Yet that peace remains the constant object of the prayers and reflections of estimable men in both parties, and the government appears willing to intervene in the matter: may heaven grant that it end in a drawing together of minds and hearts, and that this moment be the triumph of charity and truth.

The constitution *Ad evitanda animarum pericula* of the Council of Constance, confirmed by Leo X at the Council of the Lateran, states explicitly that henceforth no one is bound to avoid, in divine worship or in the participation of the sacraments, anyone against whom sentence or censure has not been expressly and formally published by the judge against a specific church, community, or individual. This decision, emanating from councils and popes, condemns the schism established among the Catholics of Holland and the one that it was attempted to establish in France following the oath of 1791.

In other Catholic countries, Molinists and Jansenists mingle their adorations and their prayers at the feet of the same altars, despite the efforts of a few turbulent men to draw a line of separation in outward worship. When, for example, a scrupulous preacher, yielding to the maneuvers of intrigue, breaks his promise to preach at Epiphany in a parish on the pretext

that it is tainted with Jansenism, the only conclusion to be drawn is that those who preach sermons sometimes deserve to be lectured themselves. One of his colleagues, who within a frail body preserves a strong soul, merely says to him: "Your conduct proves you have neither the faith nor the courage of the Magi." Public opinion ratifies this verdict, without any schism resulting.

What Is a Jansenist?

Let no one expect here a detailed account of what are called Jansenists or Port-Royalists in other countries: it will suffice to recall a few episodes of modern history in which courageous writers have successfully developed the principles upheld at Port-Royal — above all those concerning the respective rights of the various orders of the hierarchy and the independence of governments, which have thereby raised barriers between themselves and ultramontane pretensions. These episodes are: the disputes between the popes and the Republic of Venice, and with Naples; the assembly of Tuscan bishops under Duke Leopold; the aggression of Clement XIII against the Duke of Parma; Spain's part in that quarrel; Rome's dispute with Portugal when the house of Braganza regained the throne; the censures of Paul V in 1606, which condemned as heretical the oath required of English Catholics — an oath subsequently recognized as perfectly Catholic by Bossuet, Holden, the universities, and by all the English Catholics who at present take one even stronger, which no one thinks of censuring; the efforts of those same English Catholics in 1796 to obtain titular bishops in place of apostolic vicars, which produced good writings by Berington, Throckmorton, Francis Plowden, and others; the disputes between Rome and the Church of Holland; the acts of the Congress of Ems; the founding of the celebrated University of Pavia; the reforms carried out in Germany under Joseph II; those that followed from the French Revolution; and so on.

The works of Chumacero, Covarruvias, Campomanes, Villarogius, Pereira de Figueiredo, Stockman, Van Espen, Oberhauser, Balthasar, Bellegarde, Pehem, Neller, Bossuet, Gibert, Mey, Maultrot, Larrière, Lissoir, Sarpi, Giannone, Chiarizi, Mineo, Genovesi, and a hundred other illustrious defenders of ecclesiastical liberties will always be read with profit. The names of those still living are not recalled here, though very well known: to do so would be to mark them out for persecuting hatred.

Let a Bolgeni write a large book to examine the share the Jansenists had in the French Revolution and, in place of a share, attribute to them the whole — the only conclusion is that it was generous of Bolgeni to amuse or put his readers to sleep at his own expense. A false assumption constantly associates the idea of Italy with that of ultramontanism, attributing to the whole peninsula what should be confined to certain corners of it. Proximity to abuses reveals their ugliness more clearly, and often the sight of them lends greater energy to the courage needed to combat them — for Italy is probably the country where Port-Royal has the most genuine admirers.

All that has been read was perhaps necessary to pave the way for answering a question it has not seemed fitting to raise earlier: *What is a Jansenist?*

On a hundred people to whom this question were put, it is very doubtful that two could be found capable of answering it. Most will tell you that a Jansenist is an adherent of the five propositions condemned by papal briefs and attributed to Jansenius — but in fact no one upholds them. Pope Innocent XI, in his brief of February 6, 1694, to the bishops of Flanders, forbade calling anyone a Jansenist who had not been juridically convicted of upholding one of the five propositions — and, let us repeat it, everyone condemns them.

When, subsequently, severe commands were issued by the pope to submit to the bull, vehement protests were heard in nearly all the parlements and other courts. The procureur-général of the sovereign council of Roussillon, in a speech justifying the appeal, reported that a bishop of Toulouse in the twelfth century had written to the pope: "The use of appeals is so deeply rooted in France that you would sooner uproot the Apennines from Italy than take away this right from the French."[106]

Bishops and priests contested the canonical validity of the judgment pronounced by Rome; they recalled the conduct of a multitude of bishops who, in union with Pope Honorius, subscribed to monothelitism; the defection of Seleucia and that of Rimini. On this occasion they cited Bossuet, who, in an *Instruction on the Promises Made to the Church*, says regarding Rimini: "We acknowledge the scandal, and we await greater ones still in these last times, in which we know that even the elect, if it were possible, shall be led astray."[107]

106 See the *Mémoires de la régence du duc d'Orléans pendant la minorité de Louis XV*, vol. II, p. 147, year 1718, edition of 1750.

107 See Colbert, Bishop of Montpellier, vol. II, pp. 227ff.

Further on, Colbert establishes that the greater part of the bishops united with the pope have a greater authority of jurisdiction, but not of persuasion — because infallibility was promised to the body of the Church, not to the greater portion of it. At Trent, he says, a small minority of bishops wished to have it decided that residence is of divine right: should they have ceased to believe it because the majority was opposed?[108]

Cardinal de Bissy and the Bishop of Nîmes wrote to foreign churches seeking letters of acceptance of the bull. The Abbé Racine observes that the replies are almost all grounded on the supposed infallibility of the pope; most of these prelates say that so far from judging the bull, they had not even dared to read it.[109]

According to others, Jansenists are those who, calling into doubt the infallibility of the Church on dogmatic facts, deny that the five propositions are in Jansenius's book — whether verbatim, or as a summary of his doctrine. Only the first is there word for word. About seventy years ago, a Dutch parish priest deposited a sum of money with a notary and had it announced in the newspapers that he intended it for whoever could find the propositions in the *Augustinus*. It is not reported that the prize was ever awarded.

One would scarcely dare today to recall the speech delivered in the Sorbonne by de Harlay, on the affair of Jacques Vernant, concerning the bull of Alexander VII: he said "that if resistance on one side constituted guilt, obedience on the other made one no less culpable; that this holy rebellion had always been consonant with the spirit of the Church, which from its very birth furnishes us an illustrious example against him from whom the popes are obliged to confess they hold all the spiritual advantages of their see and all the ecclesiastical preeminences of their dignity."

The Jesuits maintained in their Collège de Clermont that the pope has the same infallibility as Jesus Christ, on questions of fact as well as of right. According to this theology, one was required to believe that the propositions are in Jansenius just as one believes Jesus Christ to be present in the Eucharist — divine faith in both cases equally. But divine faith in dogmatic facts having failed to win acceptance, Péréfixe, Archbishop of Paris, substituted another formula. "One must be either ignorant or malicious," said this prelate, "to claim that the Church demands divine faith for unrevealed facts: all it asks is human faith, by which one

108 Colbert, vol. II, p. 526.
109 See the *Œuvres posthumes* of the Abbé Racine, p. 74.

sincerely submits one's judgment to that of ecclesiastical superiors." Other prelates declared in their pastoral letters that the Church demands for facts only a submission of respect and silence, as Cardinals Baronius, Bellarmine, Pallavicini, and Richelieu had taught.[110]

This view is that of Cardinal Tomasi, who died in 1713, in his *Breviculus controversiæ*; it is that of Godeau, Bishop of Vence, who, speaking of general councils, says their infallibility cannot extend to matters of fact — whether concerning persons or their writings — and adds that this is a truth that has always been universally believed and taught in every Christian school and by every Catholic doctor. Thus the learned and pious Contenson asserts that no theologian until recently had ever taught that these facts were to be believed with divine faith.[111]

The author of the *Histoire de Fénelon* replies that the Church is infallible on articles which are not for that reason articles of faith; that one must distinguish between revelation and the assistance promised to the Church which, for example, is infallible in declaring the Vulgate translation authentic, even though that is not a revealed fact.[112]

In consequence of the bull, the catechisms of various dioceses — Séez, Sens, Rouen, Saint-Malo — had been altered. Yet failure to accept the bull is an offense whose gravity the French clergy has evaluated differently over time: in 1717 it was deemed a venial sin in a serious matter; by 1755, it had been made a mortal sin.

A learned Englishman, Berington, a Catholic priest, says that the name "Jansenist" is also applied to:

Those who remain neutral on the question of fact attributed to Jansenius; those who believe a Jansenist can be an honest man; those who do not admire every maxim of the Jesuits; and those who are not friends of their order.[113]

Berington might have drawn a parallel with what occurred in his own country under Charles II: that king, surrounded by a dissolute court, had made libertinism of mind and heart so fashionable that anyone who dared to have morals and believe in virtue was called a Puritan.

110 See Colbert, Bishop of Montpellier, vol. I, Preface, Introduction to the Formulary, Preface to part I, p. 6.
111 See the *Lettre à Morenas sur son prétendu Abrégé de l'histoire ecclésiastique*, 8vo, Liège, 1755, pp. 246–247.
112 Vol. II, p. 45.
113 See *Supplement to the Memoirs of Gregorio Panzani*, pp. 597–598.

An Italian author observes that Jansenism is not only a heresy but also a country — for a French monk published an account of the "land of Jansenism."[114] Father Hardouin, so well known for his erudition and his extravagances, asserts in his *Athei delecti* that to become an atheist one must begin by being a Jansenist. Yet in the turbulent course of our Revolution it was observed that, in general, those so labeled have most carefully preserved piety, learning, integrity, and good morals. In Italy, the partisans of true morality are called Jansenists *in virtù di systema politico* — and it has had defenders even among the Jesuits, such as the estimable Father Elizalde, Father Comargo, anti-probabilist in his *Regula honestatis*, and Father Giuli, who died in 1749 as a defender in all things of Father Concina.

The prince-bishop Joseph-Philippe Despaur, in his *Spectrum jansenismi*, says that what is called Jansenism or rigorism is the doctrine of St. Augustine and St. Thomas on free predestination, efficacious grace, the insufficiency of servile fear, and the obligation to love God.[2] According to Henri de Saint-Ignace, it is *crimen nullum crimen habentium* — the crime of those against whom no crime can be charged. Cardinal d'Aguirre, in the preface to his *Councils of Spain*, says one should laugh at this accusation of Jansenism — though it is used to frighten credulous seminarians out of their wits. Cardinal Bona said: "We have arrived at a time when whoever is not a Molinist is counted a Jansenist." This last label is, according to one French author, a bucket of tar of the most convenient use for ruining anyone one pleases: for of a thousand people at whom it is thrown, perhaps not two deserve it; yet certain people have an interest in finding Jansenism everywhere, as it gives them the air of combating it and shows them off as defenders of religion. To lead a simple, retired, hardworking life, or to associate with people of that stamp, is enough, he adds, to be counted a Jansenist — and this readiness to blacken one's neighbor is a cruel wound to religion, to society, and to the State.[115]

The Jansenists are reproached with exaggerating the need and the efficacy of grace. Let each man look into his own heart: how much is he to be pitied whose pride is not humbled by the sight of his own frailty, and who does not feel the need to be sustained at every step by an all-powerful hand.

For a long time they were reproached with going beyond the truth when they lamented the decay of faith and morals; we have unfortunately reached a state of things that leaves no room

114 *Annali ecclesiastici di Firenze*, 1792, no. 12.
115 See the *Œuvres* of Louis de Saint-Simon, vol. IV, book VIII, pp. 86, 99–100.

for the slightest doubt on this score — though anyone who dares to defy the mockeries of a corrupt and corrupting world is still accused of rigorism.

In Genoa and other Italian cities, if a priest goes to the theater, no one thinks to call him a Jansenist; but if he joins to an austere way of life an enlightened zeal for the liberties of the Church, if he possesses a character that neither flattery nor threats can shake, if he displays the same energy in repelling the caresses of favor and in bearing persecution — suspicions immediately arise about his orthodoxy: he is a Jansenist. Not so the Cardinal de Fleury, who, at first little liked by the Jesuits, suddenly became their friend in hope of becoming tutor to a king, and who, six months before leaving his diocese, established an inquisition against books and confessors and tormented a community of poor nuns — and see how the events of this lower world arrange themselves. When the Duke of Savoy besieged Toulon, Fleury, Bishop of Fréjus, received him pontifically at the door of his cathedral and intoned the *Te Deum*. This act of treason against his country deserved to be prosecuted; instead he was adorned with the purple and became in some sense the regent of France.[116]

Before our very eyes there has recently been renewed the scandal of Pelagian errors, preached by certain priests and three bishops — for which reason no one accuses them of Jansenism. They have been victoriously refuted by five or six clergymen who are friends of Port-Royal and who are imbued with the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ, so admirably established by Arnauld in his fine treatise on that subject. Let us not forget — for the fact is important — that many of those called Molinists liberally open heaven to pagans and heretics whom they assume to be in good faith, while damning without pity Jansenists and priests who took the oath of 1791.

Prayers for the Peace of the Church

The author of this work sincerely hopes that the disputes over Jansenism will henceforth be treated only historically, and not dogmatically — as Pius VI himself advised on April 20, 1782, in replying to the questions of the Hungarian bishops — and that the labels which serve as rallying points for the passions may henceforth be abolished.

It will doubtless be objected that this very work rekindles the memory of them. The conclusive reply is found at the end of what has already been read concerning the law of silence. He adds:

116 See Saint-Simon, vols. IX, X, etc.

who could keep that silence when supposed masters in Israel — who are assuredly not friends of Port-Royal — carrying through all of France the banner of Pelagius, promise to efface original sin without the grace of the Redeemer, render superfluous the gift of His Incarnation, foster an anti-Christian indifference by robbing the Church of its exclusive privilege of bringing forth the elect for heaven, of being the holy ark outside which there is only shipwreck — and seem to wish to hasten the fatal hour when, as divine prophecy foretells, faith shall become so rare upon the earth?

D'Avrigny claims that Rancé, the reformer of La Trappe, wrote to the Abbé Nicaise, canon of Dijon: "Arnauld is dead: many questions are now settled. His learning and his authority were of great weight for the party. Happy is he who belongs to no other party than that of Jesus Christ."[117] Yes, certainly — happy; this is how true Christians will always think. Tenderly attached to the Church, respectfully submissive to its decisions, they would defend with their very blood the legitimate authority of the head of the Church, for whom they are filled with veneration. But as implacable enemies of abuses, they remember that this authority has limits. St. Bernard, writing to his disciple Eugene III, has traced them: all that is worldly grandeur is foreign to it; all that Jesus Christ gave to St. Peter, and that St. Peter has transmitted to his successors — that is their inheritance.

117 Vol. III, p. 423.

Chapter X Religious Reflections Inspired by the Centenary of the Destruction of Port-Royal des Champs

The partisan spirit is often exclusive: persons engaged in religious disputes must ceaselessly keep watch over their own thoughts and affections, lest they wound either charity or justice. The poet Saint-Lambert, speaking of a community of men reputed to be Jansenists in whose neighborhood he lived, wrote that:

> *These wild cenobites*
> *Who to God vaunt their gloomy days*
> *Would cease to live for His sweet praise*
> *If He had died for the Jesuits.*

Exact truth is doubtless here sacrificed to the pleasures of antithesis, but one may believe that these wild cenobites had against the sons of St. Ignatius an animosity that was less than Christian.

The Jesuits repaid them in kind; they had on their hearts the humiliation of the *congregations de auxiliis*, and their hereditary hatred had not been extinguished. From their very origin Melchior Cano had applied to them St. Paul's prophecy to Timothy: "In the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be..."[118] Solminihac, Bishop of Cahors — whose canonization the clergy of France has sought — regarded them as the ruin of the Church. Their conduct toward several saintly figures, such as the venerable Palafox and Cardinal de Tournon, had left unfavorable impressions against them; they were devoted to the pope, but their interests were the measure of that devotion. They applauded Clement XI when he gave the bull *Unigenitus*, and murmured against the pope when he condemned the Chinese rites. A successor of the same name declared "that this Society had filled up the measure of scandal by impudently attacking the mysteries of Jesus Christ after having undermined, as far as it lay in their power, the dogma and the practical morality of the Gospel."

The *Provinciales* and the rubble of Port-Royal will forever stand as protests against a Society which it is impossible to deny produced great men and rendered very great services — above all in education and in the missions. Through every danger the Jesuits went to carry the Gospel and plant the cross in the most distant lands; with a surplus of zeal they made known the products and customs of those countries: in serving religion they were useful to the sciences as well. If their conduct may have closed Japan to us, their energy opened China — and without them, perhaps no one would yet have penetrated there. Why must these titles to praise be set beside the faults and abuses that moved the greatest pontiff to adorn the eighteenth century to suppress this Society?

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118 2 Timothy 3:1.

In 1709, the year of the destruction of Port-Royal, the famous Father La Chaise also died. One author writes that he left nothing to be mourned save the day of his birth.[119] Prejudice or hatred appears to have dictated this phrase. The Duc de Saint-Simon, who was no friend of the Jesuits, does him the justice of acknowledging that his counsel contributed powerfully to making good choices for the episcopate — a state of affairs that lasted until the influence of Godet des Marais, Bishop of Chartres, caused persecuting nonentities to be placed in vacant sees.[120] Even granting Father La Chaise this much credit, enough faults remain on record against him in the eyes of posterity.

On the Montlouis hill, to the east, now within the bounds of Paris, Louis XIV had a fine and well-situated house built for Father La Chaise, which still bears his name and stands complete to this day. One does not hear that it excites much curiosity. Port-Royal is destroyed and — as with the Temple of Solomon — not one stone remains upon another; yet it is a blessed land, and every year in the fine season, piety brings crowds of pilgrims to it.

Near here stood the court of the most arrogant of despots. From there came men of virtue who fled into this solitude to find refuge from the dwelling-place of scandal, or famous penitents whose remorse commanded retirement. That court and the Jesuits have alike disappeared; one hears no more of brilliant conversions, but we are still well supplied with great sinners.

For the advantage of letters and for the honor of the human race, this refuge of virtues and talents ought to have outlasted all revolutions. Yet had Port-Royal escaped destruction at the opening of the eighteenth century, by the century's close it would have found the end of its existence in any case: the religious, political, and literary services it rendered would, in the eyes of atheism, have constituted one more crime against it. Assailed by persecutors and vandals, Port-Royal would have seen the axe of destruction, or the torch of fire, arrive at its gates.

The hand of time daily destroys some remnant of this monastery, and the century just ended leaves scarcely a trace of it to the one that follows — but as the centuries accumulate they will respect both the writings and the memory of the virtues that glorified the French Thebaid.

Perhaps even upon these ancient foundations the future will see a new edifice rise, built in the same spirit. What would prevent today — there or elsewhere — friends of religion, of the sciences and arts, who by choice remain celibate but without binding themselves by vows, from organizing, with the consent of public authority, free associations, formed roughly on the same plan as that of the children of Bérulle — that celebrated congregation of which Bossuet said: "There one obeys without depending; there one governs without commanding"? What would prevent them from forming, as in England, free institutions which, under the auspices of the government and invoking its oversight, would cultivate, in the bosom of Christian virtue, all the knowledge best suited to hasten the progress of the human mind?

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119 See *Mémoires historiques et chronologiques sur l'abbaye de Port-Royal des Champs* (by the Abbé Guilbert), Utrecht, 1758, 9 vols., 12mo, vol. V, p. 380.

120 Vol. X, pp. 43ff.

This project is easily distorted and covered in disfavor — such is the fate that awaits it among that crowd of individuals who, ever placed on one side or the other of the limits reason has set, so readily travestie an opinion in order to refute what no one maintains. They will not fail to detect here the rebirth of the cloisters with all the abuses that commanded their suppression; already I seem to hear the sarcasms and the commonplaces to which the idea will give rise. But who would demean himself so far as to rebut such arguments, or to answer such men? If ignorance or ill-will renders them inaccessible to any justification, what purpose would be served by proving to them the difference between the proposed association and the abuses whose return they would affect to fear?

In any case, if the wish formed here is a fantasy, let it at least be permitted to take pleasure in the illusion. Certainly reality could never have crowned a more legitimate hope or a more sincere prayer.

The travelers frequently to be seen at Port-Royal go there to be moved beside those ruins, as the children of Israel by the ruins of Jerusalem; they sing a few canticles in the place called the desert; they pray on the ground where the church stood, and then they dine there. The occasion is a fine one for the declamators, who will not fail to cry out fanaticism and superstition — those fashionable arguments against all that is religious.

On arriving amid the ruins of this monastery, to whom can one turn to gather the information that piety and curiosity both press eagerly for? The country people of the neighborhood once had a certain breadth of ideas and knowledge, acquired through contact with the scholars we have spoken of — men who never disdained to lower themselves to the level of ordinary people in order to instruct them; moreover, all the parishes having pastors imbued with the same principles and the same love of doing good, they enlightened this region and edified it.

All this is gone. The lack is partly supplied by an octavo book, printed in 1763, under the title *Manuel des pèlerins de Port-Royal des Champs*. The anonymous author is the Abbé Gazagnes, of the diocese of Albi, better known under the name of Philbert: he also published the *Annales de la Société des Jésuites* in four quarto volumes. The work contains historical notes to guide the traveler, as by the hand, to the various points that recall remarkable events. The use of Scripture passages in this book presents some felicitous allusions against the adversaries of Port-Royal, such as the following:

> *We are not as many, who corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, even as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. As God has chosen us to entrust us with His Gospel, we speak not as pleasing men, but God, who tries our hearts. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it…*

The notices in the *Manuel* are followed by touching prayers.[121] In the work entitled *Gémissements sur la destruction de Port-Royal* there is even a prayer for the Jesuits. Religion owns this memory, which she alone, no doubt, could have inspired.

121 There exists in manuscript a work entitled *Office et Pèlerinage des saints et saintes de Port-Royal*, containing particular hymns, sequences, and other pieces that might be used if the *Manuel* is ever reprinted.

On the occasion of these religious journeys, the question has been raised whether it is permissible to honor a saint who has not been canonized. Cardinal Bellarmine will supply the answer:

> *It is permissible to render him private but not public worship, which is offered in the name of the Church. First, it is permissible to believe and to call a man holy, or blessed, who has not been canonized — but not to speak of him as having been inscribed by the Church in the catalogue of the saints. Second, it is permissible to invoke him when others are present, but not in public supplications. Third, it is not permissible to celebrate a public feast in his honor, but it is permissible to mark a particular joy on the anniversary of his death and to devote oneself more specially to the things of God on that day, making commemoration of this saint. Fourth, it is permissible to have his image and to show it veneration, but not to place it in churches; neither should his relics be exposed there, but it is permissible to keep and honor them. Such is the practice of the Catholic Church. At the death of the martyrs, the faithful hastened to obtain their relics; likewise at the death of those men whom the holiness of their lives has made famous, many faithful have the devotion to kiss their hands and feet and to keep something of their garments as relics — a practice which has never been forbidden.*[122]

These principles, clearly established by one of the most celebrated writers the Society of Jesus has to its honor, justify the piety that goes to be moved and edified amid the tombs and rubble of a monastery on which the memory of the virtues that immortalized it seems, as it were, engraved. All there speaks of God, of those who loved Him, of the misfortune of loving anything but Him — and he loves God not at all who attaches himself to anything the world can take away from us.[123]

Meditation seems to dwell in this region where once melodious voices resounded and the celestial chant of virgins. Today silence reigns; scarcely is it broken at times by the clatter of the mill and the moaning of the solitary wood-pigeon that inhabits the forests. Who could traverse them without feeling a gentle emotion?

On this terrace of the house of Les Granges, where so many scholars absorbed in work and study meditated upon the things of eternity — how many times have I visited those ancient trees planted by the hand of d'Andilly, which in their shade received those illustrious solitaries. How many times, from the heights of the rocks overhanging the road to Chevreuse, at the setting of the sun, meditating on the evening of life, have I surrendered to the impressions that the sight of these places inspires — thinking that perhaps for the last time my eyes were contemplating this solitude. Whether from the surrounding hillsides my gaze plunges into the valley, or from the valley's depths I take in a horizon bounded by the neighboring slopes that isolates me from the universe — everywhere I meet with memories.

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122 See the work of Cardinal Bellarmine *On the beatification and canonization of saints*, vol. II, ch. X, p. 705, Paris, 1613.

123 Duguet, *Explication de la Passion*.

The eloquence of these ruins penetrates my soul with a religious feeling: the past and the future come rushing in together. In the places where death most frequently does its work, amid the cities, we forget it; here I find its image again. Hope strips it of its mournful aspect; it is nothing more than the passage from darkness to light, from fear to certainty, from desire to reality, from exile to the promised land.

In this grotto, Sacy — always in fragile health — came to repeat to God the prayer he had borrowed from St. Fulgentius: *Da mihi modo patientiam et postea indulgentiam* — grant me now patience, and afterward have mercy upon me.

On these paths I meet Hamon, going to bring the sick the resources of his art, his purse, and the consolations of charity.

Here Nicole, wearied of controversy, invites Arnauld in his usual gentle way to lay down his pen — and Arnauld replies with energy: "Have we not all eternity in which to rest?"

In that secluded walk I catch sight of Pascal; perhaps he is resolving a problem that had defied the geometers, or developing a new proof of the divinity of Christianity.

Further on, with Tillemont and Lancelot, Racine, La Bruyère, Despréaux, and Dodart are walking — come to visit their friends. Erudition, genius, taste, and piety preside over this conversation. Men of letters in that age also studied in order to become better; today one is content merely to wish to shine. They aspired less to a noisy reputation than to an unblemished one; and rarely could one have said to the philosophers of their time what might be said today: "Preceptor of the human race, you preach virtue to me — I consent to read your writings; but hide your actions from me."

Echoes of these deserts, ancient trees — why could you not preserve the conversations of these celebrated men? With what reverence I would go to question you and gather the accounts of which you would be the keepers!

Man has divided into regular periods this succession of beings that we call time. The return of the same epochs adds nothing and changes nothing in the nature of past events; but upon these epochs he loves to fix his imagination, attaching to them memories dear to his soul and to which moral and religious ideas are bound. The passage of seasons, years, and centuries speaks to him of the swiftness of his days upon a earth he merely grazes until the moment it receives his mortal remains — and of that future into which he must soon plunge forever.

Such is the cause that led nearly all peoples to establish periodic solemnities, and those secular festivals which antiquity celebrated at Rome with such great ceremony. A public herald announced them, saying: "Come to a festival you have never seen and will see no more." In a corner of Asia, the only people that worshipped the true God had their jubilee years every fifty years; and this institution took on a new form within the Catholic religion,

which in 1500 celebrated its first jubilee. In 1640, the Jesuits celebrated even in the Philippine Islands[124] the centenary of their founding.

Let us hasten to recall that at the extraordinary assembly of the French clergy in 1782, Beauvais, Bishop of Senez, the clergy's orator, occupying the pulpit which seemed still to resound with the majestic accents of Bossuet, set forth the motives that should bind citizens to their country, and the particular motives that ought to unite us more closely to our own; he recalled the doctrine that the clergy of France enshrined in its celebrated declaration of 1682, and consecrated its centenary by a solemn profession of the same doctrine.[125]

If the centenary of the destruction of Port-Royal calls for tears, several motives for consolation temper their bitterness. It was a beacon that spread its light in every direction; but it gave offense to envy, which leagued itself with hatred to annihilate it — and succeeded. In the eyes of faith all this is explained.

Port-Royal yet lives through the writings it published and the examples it gave. In those writings, the truths to be believed and the virtues to be practiced — as Christian and as citizen — shine with all their luster; they will cross the centuries to instruct the most distant posterity. And its examples, gathered up by history, will still edify the generations to come; with the Psalmist they will say: "These are the things we have heard and known, and which our fathers have told us."[126] Our fathers have spoken to us of these scholars, these champions, these Christian virgins, who in their retreat prepared themselves for eternity: "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight... and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."[127]

How sweet it is to think that those who have left earthly life to arrive at a better one form with us but a single family, are united to us by the bonds of charity, and take an interest in our needs: they will be our protectors if we are their imitators. St. Jerome, speaking of pilgrimages to the Holy Land, said: "What is praiseworthy is not having been to Jerusalem, but having lived well in Jerusalem." And what does it matter to visit a celebrated solitude, if you do not work without ceasing to gather good works for heaven, remembering that the earth flies beneath your feet and devours its inhabitants? Who knows, moreover, whether certain people have not already made plans to slander these pilgrimages — in which case it would be wise to refrain from them.

The feelings that the sight and the memory of Port-Royal ought forever to inspire grow stronger at the close of the centenary period, and draw fresh energy from the circumstances in which we are placed. The august religion commands us to return good for evil. The sacrificers of Port-Royal bequeathed their fury to the following century; the victims, falling beneath the

124 See *Historia de Philipinas de la compañía de Jesús*, second part, by Father Murillo Velarde, book II, ch. XIII, pp. 123ff.
125 See the *Procès-verbal de l'assemblée extraordinaire de 1782*, p. 17.
126 Psalm 78
127 Hebrews 12:1

sword of iniquity, bequeathed their unalterable gentleness. The men who continue to outrage truth and its defenders must be the special object of your tenderness and your prayers.

In addressing prayers to the Eternal, who could forget the disasters of a Church that was once the model of Christendom? Have they truly conspired to ruin it, those pastors who, deaf to the voice of piety and of country, perpetuate divisions? Are they, in the decrees of heaven, the guilty instruments of its vengeance? A great man warns us that religion, a traveller upon earth, asks only freedom of passage. Lands where it once flourished are now covered with the darkness of error and unbelief. Whatever fate the justice or the mercy of God may have in store for us, let us remain inviolably united to that Catholic Church which, crossing the ages, raises its radiant head amid the sects it sees successively rise and crumble around it — and which, resting upon the promises of its divine founder, marches toward the consummation of the centuries.

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